CTC SENTINEL

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Contents

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The Combating Terrorism Center is an independent educational and research institution based in the Department of Social Sciences at the United States Military Academy, West Point. The CTC Sentinel harnesses the Center's global network of scholars and practitioners to understand and confront contemporary threats posed by terrorism and other forms of political violence.

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Terrorist Awakening in Sweden?

By Magnus Ranstorp

Swedish police at the scene of a terrorist attack in central Stockholm in December 2010. - Photo by Jonathan Nackstrand/AFP/Getty Images

FOR DECADES, SWEDEN has been regarded as the relative backwater of international terrorism. Even Usama bin Ladin had mentioned Sweden as immune from terrorism in an al-Jazira broadcast in October 2004. This sense of immunity was shattered twice in December 2010. First, a suicide bomber struck in the Nordic countries for the first time ever on December 11. The Swedish security service, Säkerhetspolisen (SÄPO), had no record of the bomber before the attack, as he had studied and lived for a decade in the United Kingdom. At the same time, he admitted he had traveled to Iraq to perform jihad. Second, four Swedes were arrested later that month for planning to conduct a protracted Mumbai-style attack on the *Jyllands-Posten* newspaper in Copenhagen, Denmark. The men were arrested after driving from Sweden to Copenhagen to execute the attack. Third, SÄPO produced a report on violent Islamist extremism which outlined that it had identified about 200 extremists in Sweden; more than 80% were socially connected, and most lived inside the three major cities of Sweden, with more than half residing in Stockholm.[1]

This article examines the circumstances behind these developments and their implications for the evolution of terrorism in Sweden. It illustrates the interconnectivity of terrorist social networks, and it underscores the importance of terrorist travelers to Pakistan and Somalia and the potential for a boomerang effect. To some extent, this article argues that the events in Sweden are a microcosm or reflection of broader terrorism trends.

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1 "Våldsbejakande islamistisk extremism i Sverige," Säkerhetspolisen, 2010.

Report Documentation Page		Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188

Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.

1. REPORT DATE **JAN 2011**	2. REPORT TYPE	3. DATES COVERED **00-00-2011 to 00-00-2011**
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE **Terrorist Awakening in Sweden?**		5a. CONTRACT NUMBER
		5b. GRANT NUMBER
		5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER
6. AUTHOR(S)		5d. PROJECT NUMBER
		5e. TASK NUMBER
		5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) **Combating Terrorism center,US Military Academy,607 Cullum Road, Lincoln Hall,West Point,NY,10996**		8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)		10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)
		11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)

12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
Approved for public release; distribution unlimited

13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES
The Combating Terrorism Center is an independent educational and research institution based in the Department of Social Sciences at the United States Military Academy, West Point. The CTC Sentinel harnesses the Center?s global network of scholars and practitioners to understand and confront contemporary threats posed by terrorism and other forms of political violence.

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15. SUBJECT TERMS

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT **unclassified**	b. ABSTRACT **unclassified**	c. THIS PAGE **unclassified**	**Public Release**	**24**	

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 8-98)
Prescribed by ANSI Std Z39-18

Anatomy of Sweden's First Suicide Bomber

On December 11, 2010, a 28-year-old Iraqi-Swede, Taimour Adbulwahab al-Abdaly, became the first suicide bomber in Sweden when he accidentally detonated one of the six pipe bombs strapped to his body among busy Christmas shoppers in central Stockholm. The Swedish public narrowly escaped a major terrorist attack that was cleverly designed as a multipronged, one-man mass casualty event. Beginning with the explosion of his station wagon filled with gas tubes and flammable material, al-Abdaly had planned to walk down Drottninggatan, a major pedestrian shopping street, toward a large department store and the main central railway station placing two or more explosive devices at different locations before detonating his own serial-connected pipe bombs strapped to his body. Al-Abdaly had at least six pipe bombs filled with ball bearings, a pressure-cooker, and a backpack filled with explosives and nails.

Al-Abdaly commenced the operation earlier that day at the crack of dawn by driving to Stockholm from his parents' house in the small town of Tranås, a 170-mile journey northward. He would have arrived in Stockholm about three hours later following the collection of explosive devices from an undisclosed storage site. Assuming al-Abdaly arrived in Stockholm around midday, it is still unclear where he initially went and what he did prior to the commencement of the terrorist assault at 4:40 PM. At precisely that time, al-Abdaly sent different e-mails to three recipients: his wife, the Swedish Security Service SÄPO (which failed to check it for 4.5 hours), and Tidningarnas Telegrambyrå, the official Swedish wire service. The e-mail contained pre-recorded sound files. In the English and Arabic versions, al-Abdaly's message was addressed to his wife asking for forgiveness and explaining that he had been secretly a mujahidin for the past four years and that his business trips to the Middle East had been a lie. Al-Abdaly's wife, living in Luton in the United Kingdom, would later profess no knowledge of his activities in an exclusive interview to controversial television broadcaster, Muslim convert and ex-Taliban prisoner Yvonne Ridley, yet a longer unedited version of the tape appeared within 24 hours on the couple's shared YouTube account: mona123timo.

His wife inserted a martyrdom picture, "Hoor al-Ayn," depicting a martyr on horseback as "mood background" for the recording. This suggested either his wife knew more than she claimed, or that there was possibly an accomplice to al-Abdaly at large.[2]

The issue of possible accomplices has been strongly suspected for a number of reasons. First, in the pre-recorded tapes, there is clearly a second person breathing and there have been efforts to remove everything below 100 hertz on all three tapes.[3] A second reason is the two-way radio found by his body after one of the pipe bombs detonated prematurely. Third, according to those close to the investigation, the contraption of pipe bombs was too cumbersome and complex for him to have put on his body alone. Fourth, closed-circuit television footage captured, after the accidental detonation, the images of a man wearing a sketchy billboard sign for "London restaurant" with a red khaffiyeh wrapped around his face that seemed to be the only individual focused and drawn to the scene where al-Abdaly was dying, as everyone else fled the explosion. Fifth, al-Abdaly's disclosure on the farewell tape that he frequently traveled to the Middle East to wage jihad raised the prospect that he had links to more organized terrorist networks in the region. This was strengthened by his affinity to the Islamic State of Iraq on his Facebook page, postings of Shaykh Muhammad al-Maqdisi and multiple credible claims by radical al-Qa`ida-affiliated websites that suggested he belonged to the Islamic State of Iraq. Postings on al-Hanin and the popular Shumukh al-Islam websites suggested this affiliation.[4] It has also emerged that General Zia Alkanani, the counterterrorism chief in Iraq, has claimed that al-Abdaly spent three months in Mosul at an explosives training camp together with an Egyptian accomplice, according to imprisoned al-Qa`ida members.[5]

After sending his farewell e-mails, al-Abdaly proceeded to ignite his car filled with gas canisters and flammable material, which burst into flames at 4:52 PM. He then walked toward the pedestrian shopping street Drottninggatan for 10 minutes, where he began to fiddle with his equipment, walking in and out of a side street talking on either a communication radio or mobile phone before his explosive device detonated prematurely. From eyewitness accounts, it is clear there was a malfunction rather than a desire to abort the operation. Taking refuge in a more deserted side street, al-Abdaly placed his bomb belt down moments before his pipe bomb exploded.[6] He died quickly without killing anyone else.

Profile of Taimour al-Abdaly

Five days after the suicide bombing, SÄPO provided the findings of a previously cabinet-commissioned report on Islamic extremism in Sweden. Embarrassingly, SÄPO had to admit that al-Abdaly was not among the 200 Islamic extremists it had previously identified. Interestingly, SÄPO's chief, Anders Danielsson, also placed partial blame why they missed him on MI5—his British counterpart—as al-Abdaly had resided in the United Kingdom since 2001 (although he frequently visited his parents in Sweden).

Profiling Taimour Abdulwahab al-Abdaly has produced a complicated picture of a relative loner that radicalized in Luton in the United Kingdom, surrounded possibly by shadowy figures connected as "brokers" to Mohammed Siddique Khan, a small cadre of the outlawed Islamist group al-Muhajiroun, and possibly by a more nefarious terrorist network emerging from Iraq, as he traveled there frequently.

Al-Abdaly was born in Baghdad in 1982 and arrived with his father, mother, and older sister to Tranås, Sweden at the age of 10. Tranås is a small town with a population of 18,000 inhabitants. It appears that al-Abdaly adapted well there, quickly learning Swedish, becoming known as a keen basketball player and was well-liked by his friends. He graduated from secondary school in

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2 Martin Ekelund, "Nätet avslöjar medhjälparen," *Aftonbladet*, January 3, 2011. Also see www.gudmundson.blogspot.com.

3 Mikael Stengård and Eveline Grassman, "Experter: Ljudet är manipulerat," *Aftonbladet*, December 18, 2010.

4 Sam Jones and Haroon Siddique, "Stockholm Suicide Bomber Confronted by Luton Mosque Leaders," *Guardian*, December 13, 2010.

5 "Iraqi Official to al-Arabiya: Stockholm Bomber Trained

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3 Months in Mosul," al-Arabiya, January 7, 2011.

6 Richard Ashberg and Johanna Hellsten, "Buken full med metal," *Aftonbladet*, December 16, 2010.

natural sciences and there was no major indication that religion was a significant part of his life. In fact, he had a Jewish girlfriend.[7] All of this would change as he moved to Luton in the United Kingdom to enroll at the University of Bedfordshire to study sports therapy in 2001.

Only weeks after al-Abdaly enrolled in the university, the September 11, 2001 attacks occurred. This was a period of immense identity turmoil with intertwined experiences of xenophobia, Islamophobia and extremist Islamist sentiments.[8] The far-right English Defense League was active in Luton as well. The activities of the Finsbury Park Mosque and the openly radical Abu Hamza al-Masri were only a short train ride away, and investigators are pursuing leads as to whether al-Abdaly visited the controversial mosque.[9] There are no signs that al-Abdaly was involved in radical groups at the university. Instead, while at university he met his future wife, Mona (also known as Umm Amira), a young woman from Romania who partially grew up in Sweden.[10] He married her in 2004, and he graduated with a BSc in sports therapy. They had their first daughter in 2006, the second in 2008 and in the summer of 2010 they had a son and named him Usama in honor of Usama bin Ladin. After meeting al-Abdaly, she rapidly became religious, wearing the *djellaba*.

A suspected turning point for al-Abdaly was the fact that Mohammed Siddique Khan and the London bombers had driven to Luton railway station before heading to conduct the operation of July 7, 2005. In fact, three streets from al-Abdaly's house in Bury Park, Luton, lived Mohammed Quayyum Khan, known as "Q," who was instrumental in arranging for the ringleader of the 2005 London bombers, Mohammed Siddique Khan, to travel to Pakistan

to attend a terrorist training camp.[11] It is still to be determined if there is any connection between Q and al-Abdaly. It is likely, however, that al-Abdaly came into contact with more extremist elements since the Bury Park area of Luton has "featured prominently in counterterrorism investigations."[12] Regardless, the July 2005 London attacks likely played a role in al-Abdaly's radicalization process.

It is also clear that al-Abdaly was affected by the 2006 Israel-Hizb Allah war in Lebanon. This is evident from his postings on Facebook. While he seemed to admire Hizb Allah leader Hassan Nasrallah, it was also clear that he was vehemently anti-Shi`a in Iraq. Similarly, he watched shock video clips with violent images from Chechnya that

"The debate climate about terrorist threat assessment in Sweden had been stifled by ideologically-driven debaters who used the label of Islamophobia and racism to silence the issue. This is not possible anymore."

regularly portrayed Russian atrocities and the bravery of the mujahidin, suicide operations in Iraq, and humiliating interrogation scenes where U.S. soldiers taunted Iraqi prisoners. He also seemed to have a fascination with Judgment Day, radical extremist ideologues and *anashid* (jihadist songs). His own Facebook profile picture depicted a mujahid raising the black battleflag of Islam. Some have speculated that he came into contact with the Reflect Project, previously known as al-Muhajiroun, which organized a protest at a homecoming parade in Luton for troops who had served in Afghanistan.[13]

Some of these followers were connected to radical cleric Omar Bakri Mohammed, and they had open recruitment stalls on the high street near the al-Abdaly family home.

Al-Abdaly appears to have been affected by a confrontation with Qadeer Baksh, the chairman of the Luton Islamic Center. According to mosque officials, al-Abdaly showed up at the Luton Islamic Center, also known as the al-Ghurabaa mosque, during Ramadan 2006-2007. According to Baksh, his congregation immediately drew to his attention that al-Abdaly harbored extremist views about jihad and *takfiri* principles and was encouraging rebellion against Muslim leaders. This caused Baksh to undertake several personal interventions in an effort to deconstruct his arguments with a theological debate. On several occasions, it seemed al-Abdaly came to accept Baksh's rebuttals, but it became known that al-Abdaly continued to spread extremist views among the community. As a result, Baksh decided to publicly confront him in front of 100 worshippers at an early morning prayer.[14] Al-Abdaly stormed out of the mosque humiliated, angry and disappeared, probably traveling back and forth to the Middle East and Sweden.[15]

In 2007, al-Abdaly began traveling extensively to Jordan and Iraq. In 2008, he reportedly traveled to Syria as well.[16] Al-Abdaly collected new Swedish passports in 2001, 2007 and 2008, the last of which he claimed was lost abroad.[17] This is seen as evidence that he was attempting to conceal his travel patterns and destinations to perform jihad in the Middle East. It is possible that he even had an extra Swedish passport so he could switch back and forth, concealing his entry and exit to suspicious destinations to British officials.

Al-Abdaly surfaced again on November 19, 2010 when he returned to Sweden alone to stay with his parents long

7 Eduardo Grutzky, "Jag var självmordsbombarens fritidsledare," Newsmill.se, January 5, 2011.

8 Jonathan Githens-Mazer and Robert Lambert, *Islamophobia and Anti-Muslim Hate Crime: A London Case Study* (Exeter: University of Exeter, 2010).

9 Sean O'Neill and Daniel McGrory, *The Suicide Factory: Abu Hamza and the Finsbury Park Mosque* (London: Harper Collins, 2006).

10 Olle Lönnaeus and Erik Magnusson, "Mannen som skulle sprang sig själv," *Sydsvenskan*, December 19, 2010.

11 Sam Jones, Ian Corbain, Richard Norton-Taylor and Shiv Malik, "The 'Bubbly' Luton Radical Who Became a Suicide Bomber in Sweden," *Guardian*, December 14, 2010.

12 Ibid.

13 Jason Lewis, "Stockholm Bomber: Banned Extremists Recruit Near Taimour Abdulwahab al-Abdaly's Luton

Home," *Sunday Telegraph*, December 19, 2010.

14 BBC Newsnight, December 13, 2010.

15 Ibid.

16 Martin Evans, "Stockholm Bomber: Family Blame Britain for Radicalization," *Telegraph*, December 13, 2010.

17 Martin Ekelund, "Reste med olika pass," *Aftonbladet*, December 23, 2010.

enough to celebrate his own and his father's birthday, which they commonly share. He stayed in his parents' flat in Tranås and proceeded over the next two weeks to acquire a vehicle for $1,300, aluminum powder, pyrotechnics and nails and ball bearings from local hardware stores. Few believe that he was alone in what seems to be a rather overly complex operation for a lone wolf. His carefully prepared farewell tapes in Arabic, Swedish and English strengthens this suspicion.

Al-Abdaly's farewell tapes followed a familiar al-Qa`ida-inspired narrative script. It emphasized humiliation of Muslims under siege as evidenced by the occupation of Muslim lands (Afghanistan); reinforced by metaphorical issues (the Lars Vilks controversy[18]); offering reciprocal revenge by urging "all mujahidin in Europe and Sweden" to strike now. The issue of possible affiliation to the Islamic State of Iraq was raised due to the fact that al-Abdaly alluded to the "Islamic State" in his script. A puzzling feature is why the Islamic State of Iraq, if involved, did not claim any responsibility. By his own admission in the tape, he participated for four years in jihad overseas.

Munir Awad and the Jyllands-Posten Plot

The second terrorist incident involving Sweden in December 2010 was the case of four Swedes arrested for planning to conduct a Mumbai-style attack on the *Jyllands-Posten* newspaper in Copenhagen, Denmark. The men were arrested after driving from Sweden to Copenhagen to execute the attack. A central figure in the plot is Munir Awad, a 29-year-old Lebanon-born Swedish citizen. This case is well-known in Sweden for a number of reasons.

First, Awad and his pregnant girlfriend, Safia Benaouda (the daughter of the head of the Swedish Muslim Council), was caught initially in Somalia in 2007 by Ethiopian forces and interrogated by Kenyan and U.S. intelligence. They had veered off a trip to Dubai and decided to visit Somalia "to see a more traditional Muslim culture," in their own words.[19]

Traveling in separate convoys, Safia was with the wife of U.S. citizen Daniel Maldonado, a convicted terrorist who had undertaken training in bomb-making and volunteered for suicide operations.[20]

Second, Awad, his girlfriend and their baby were caught in Dera Ghazi Khan by Pakistani security, together with Mehdi Ghezali and seven other Germans in August 2009 after traveling through Iran en route to Miran Shah in North Waziristan Agency of Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas. It is believed that two of the Germans have links to the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU). According to Ghezali, he was traveling to a Tablighi Jama`at meeting, although security officials confiscated $10,940 in cash, knives, a neck trap (disguised in diapers) and electronic items.[21] This 43-day prison incident became problematic for Helena Benaouda, the chairwoman of the Swedish Muslim Council, who campaigned tirelessly protesting their innocence.

Third, Awad shared an apartment with 26-year-old Ellas Bille Mohamed, one of the two al-Shabab terrorists who were recently convicted of preparing and commissioning suicide operations in Somalia. This connection reinforces the overlapping social relationships in these semi-closed extremist circuits and suspicions about Awad's previous travel patterns in Somalia and Pakistan. Awad also had strong social contacts with Sahbi Zalouti, one of the accomplices in the Copenhagen plot (who rented the vehicle for the trip from Stockholm to Copenhagen but never joined the operation). While Zalouti was similarly detained in Pakistan in areas controlled by the Taliban and al-Qa`ida, another accomplice, Mounir Dhahri, spent considerable time with extremists in Pakistan.

These overlapping social networks made it easy for SÄPO to identify and monitor the different suspects in the plot against *Jyllands-Posten*. Apart from Munir Awad and Sahbi Zalouti, the network involved 30-year-old Moroccan Omar Abdallah Aboelazm, a convicted sexual offender who has been in psychiatric care, and 44-year-old Mounir Dhahri, a former drug addict convicted of spousal abuse, drug offenses and assault.[22] It is believed that Zalouti was the more senior leader in the network, but he bailed out of the trip to Denmark. Consequently, it is believed that Mounir Dhahri became the key figure driving the plot forward. Dhahri also spent significant time in Pakistan, which is likely to become key to the investigation.

There are also indirect links between Munir Awad and the *Jyllands-Posten* plot and the earlier 2009 plot against the same newspaper by David Coleman Headley (who has been linked to the senior terrorist Ilyas Kashmiri).[23] Kashmiri, who also has close ties to Lashkar-i-Tayyiba, provided Headley with two sets of contacts for the planned 2009 operation in Copenhagen: two followers in Derby, England, and one individual in Stockholm named Farid, a Moroccan-born businessman who declined participation in August 2009 as he was believed to be under surveillance by SÄPO.[24] Farid is a major figure in extremist circles in Stockholm and he knew some of the suspects in the *Jyllands-Posten* plot of December 2010.

After discovering the December plot, SÄPO and the Danish Intelligence & Security Service (PET) kept the Swedes under surveillance for two months. On December 29, 2010, Awad, Aboelazm and Dhahri left Stockholm for Denmark in their rental car to launch a "storming" operation against *Jyllands-Posten*. In the middle of the night, they started the six hour drive from Stockholm to Copenhagen. Later that day in the morning, they were arrested in

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18 Lars Vilks is a Swedish artist who depicted the Prophet Muhammad in drawings.

19 "Nowhere to Go: Sweden's Complicity in the World-Wide Detention of Monir Awad," Cage Prisoners, No-

vember 2010.

20 Michael Taarnby and Lars Hallundbaek, "Al-Shabaab: The Internationalization of Militant Islamism in Somalia and the Implications for Radicalisation Processes in Europe," report supported by the Danish Ministry of Justice, February 26, 2010; "American Charged with Receiving Al Qaeda Terrorist Training in Weapons, Bomb-Making, and Interrogation Techniques in Somalia," *U.S.A. v. Daniel Maldonado a/k/a Daniel Aljughaifi*, Southern District of Texas, 2007.

21 "Här grips de – misstänkta för terrorism," *Aftonbladet*, September 12, 2009.

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22 Ibid.

23 Jette Elbeak Maressa and Heidi Plougsgaard, "Han er den pakistanske forbindelse," *Jyllands-Posten*, October 28, 2010.

24 Yassin Marmasbash, "Investigators Look into Possible Ties to 'Mickey Mouse Project,'" *Jyllands-Posten*, December 30, 2010; Kaare Sorensen and Carsten Ellegard, "David Headley forsogte at rekruttere terrorist i Sverige," *Jyllands-Posten*, November 9, 2010.

Copenhagen in a joint Danish-Swedish intelligence operation after continuous surveillance on the car throughout the journey. In a joint news conference, both the SÄPO and PET heads emphasized that an attack was imminent. The terrorists had in their possession a machine gun with a silencer and 72 cartridge shells as well as a 9mm pistol with 36 shells. They also possessed a large quantity of plastic strips to tie hands.[25] While the terrorist plan was a Mumbai-style operation "in miniature," closely resembling the original Headley plan, it is unclear whether the suspects had conducted advance reconnaissance on *Jyllands-Posten*. The PET head, Jakob Scharf, did not want to rule out the possible connection to the Headley case.

Microcosm of Terrorism: Reflecting Broader Trends?

Sweden experienced both luck and skill in averting two major mass casualty attacks in December 2010. Intelligence by its nature involves filtering and puzzling together fragments of information in a timely manner. As the former head of the United Kingdom's Joint Terrorism Analysis Center (JTAC) once said, "Our work can best be described as trying to drink water from a water hydrant on full blast. It is not the absence of information; rather the difficulty lies in filtering out the necessary and critical pieces and piecing these together quickly, accurately and to the right agencies."[26] Even if SÄPO was blindsided, it had as much to do with the UK intelligence agencies missing al-Abdaly under their watch.

Both the al-Abdaly and Awad cases illustrate the importance of intensifying focus on so-called terrorist travelers or foreign fighters. SÄPO has stated that it believes there are 20-30 Swedes who have traveled to Somalia to fight and join al-Shabab; three or four individuals have died there. Authorities have focused on working with the Somali communities to strengthen their resilience against extremism and recruitment. Unlike other minority immigrant communities, who are suspicious and difficult to

contact and establish trust, the Somali community is the reverse and keen to work with authorities. The Somali issue is also shared with other neighboring countries as there are family and clan links cutting across Sweden, Denmark, Norway and the United Kingdom. Unlike other foreign fighter destination points, Somalis do not have a "romanticized" view about the brutality of the conflict; the reverse is true for Pakistan or Yemen.

Both Sweden and Denmark are increasingly focusing on Pakistan as a destination as well as to a lesser extent Yemen. For Denmark, the security environment has been "red" for a significant period as there have been four terrorist trials during the last four years. There have also been four attacks against *Jyllands-Posten* and the Danish cartoonist Kurt Westergaard since 2009. Not only are converts and extremist recruits lured by extremist facilitation brokers, but Denmark and, to a lesser degree, Sweden are becoming prioritized symbolic attack targets for core al-Qa`ida, regional affiliates and Pakistani extremist groups due to the Prophet Muhammad cartoon affair and the Lars Vilks controversy. This is exacerbated by the perception of a possible "Madrid effect," where extremists are calculating that targeting Sweden, as well as Germany, would not only create a societal shock effect, but also contribute to eroding support for ISAF contribution to Afghanistan.

Terrorist mobility within the European Union is also cause for concern. The recent case of Lars Doukajev, the one-legged Belgian-Chechen bomber who was arrested in September 2010 after his explosives detonated prematurely in a Copenhagen hotel as he was preparing a parcel bomb for *Jyllands-Posten*, is illustrative of the threat from "lone wolves" or unexpected sources. Doukajev filed off the serial number of his prosthetic limb and did not have a cell phone, identification card, credit card, or any other piece of unique information. It took almost a week to identify him and it was not the intelligence services but rather a tabloid newspaper that succeeded. The worrying element is not what intelligence services see, but rather what they do not know or miss. To an extent, this is the case with those extremist groups in Pakistan emerging

out of the shadows, with no connectivity to al-Qa`ida, that are beginning to pose a transnational terrorist threat.

The Swedish context illustrates the close social networks or circuits that extremists move in. Most know each other; some even live together. An equally important, but often unexplored issue is the role of women, wives and widows in these networks. These women play not only supporting roles and provide excellent cover for logistical transactions, but also become pivotal in cementing social network ties.[27] The role of widows of prominent terrorist leaders is interesting in this respect as they can become recruitment sergeants, as in the Belgian case of Malika el-Aroud.

Finally, the December 2010 attacks in and from Sweden were sudden and unexpected. Swedish politicians and the public were shocked. The debate climate about terrorist threat assessment in Sweden had been stifled by ideologically-driven debaters who used the label of Islamophobia and racism to silence the issue. This is not possible anymore. The challenge for Sweden will be to debate the issues more frankly but sensibly, while simultaneously addressing the issue of countermeasures against extremism. For this, Sweden is looking toward Denmark, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, which have had longstanding community-based "experiments" in countering violent extremism. The trick is to find suitable transferable lessons. It will require a national strategy against extremism. The other challenge is for the Swedish Muslim community to address the issue of extremism from within.

Dr. Magnus Ranstorp is the Research Director of the Center for Asymmetric Threat Studies at the Swedish National Defence College.

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25 "Terrorsigtede havde 108 skarpe skud klar," *Berlingske Tidende*, December 30, 2010.

26 Personal interview, Swedish National Defence College, November 2006.

27 Nivette Dawood and Kristina Edblom, "Hustru – till en terrorist," *Aftonbladet*, December 19, 2010.

British Universities Continue to Breed Extremists

By James Brandon

IN EARLY OCTOBER 2010, University College London (UCL) published its official inquiry into the radicalization of Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, who is currently awaiting trial in the United States for attempting to destroy a Detroit-bound airliner on Christmas Day 2009. The inquiry concluded that "there is no evidence to suggest either that Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab was radicalized while a student at UCL or that conditions at UCL during that time or subsequently are conducive to the radicalization of students."[1] To reach this conclusion, the report overlooked abundant evidence that Abdulmutallab had not only entrenched his extremist leanings while studying in London, but also actively sought to popularize such views among his fellow students.[2] The report, for instance, skimmed over the many web postings Abdulmutallab made during his time at UCL that showed his increasing theological rigidity and intolerance. It also did not mention that the campus' Islamic society (ISoc),[3] of which Abdulmutallab was president in 2006-2007, regularly invited hard line Salafist and Islamist speakers to campus during this period, holding events which one student described as "brainwashing."[4]

The UCL report is only the latest evidence that UK universities are still failing to understand, let alone seriously grapple with, the problem of radicalization of students at UK universities—more than 15 years since the first British university students graduated to the battlefields of international jihad. Indeed, since the report was published, another graduate of a British university, Taimour Adbulwahab al-Abdaly, died in December 2010 while attempting to carry out a multiple bombing attack in Stockholm.[5]

Background

During the 1990s, British university campuses played a key role in the evolution of international jihadist networks, providing extremist groups a steady source of motivated and high-caliber recruits whose UK passports enabled them to move freely around the world. One of the earliest such recruits was Omar Saeed Sheikh, a British Muslim from a privileged Pakistani background, who was radicalized in the early-1990s while at the London School of Economics (LSE). After hearing Omar Bakri, the leader of the radical al-Muhajiroun group, speak on campus about the then-ongoing massacre of Muslims in Bosnia, he embarked on a career of jihadist action, becoming involved with militant groups in Bosnia, India and Pakistan.[6] In 2002, Sheikh was found guilty of leading the kidnapping and beheading of U.S. reporter Daniel Pearl in Pakistan. Since then, British universities have consistently acted as breeding grounds for extremism, with British university graduates joining jihadist movements in Iraq, Kashmir, Israel and elsewhere. Indeed, just one year after the conviction of Sharif, Omar Khan Sharif, a former student at King's College university in London, took part in a suicide bomb attack in Tel Aviv. Sharif, like al-Abdaly, the Stockholm bomber, is believed to have been pushed toward violence by the rhetoric of Hizb al-Tahir (HT), a radical but ostensibly non-violent Islamist group.[7] Other students recruited into HT at British universities have gone on to play leading roles in setting up HT branches in Pakistan and Bangladesh.[8]

At present, it is difficult to say whether British Muslims who go to university are any more or less likely to carry out acts of terrorism than those who do not. Current research shows that around 35% of British terrorist convicts have studied for a higher education qualification—not far off the national average.[9] That said, many university graduates seem to have played key roles in those terrorist

> "These and other cases suggest that Abdulmutallab's radicalization at UCL was not an outlier; it was part of a trend of university-educated radicals becoming involved in sophisticated terrorist plots."

attacks that come closer to "success." For instance, the 2007 attempted car bomb attacks in central London and Glasgow airport, which failed only due to minor technical flaws in the bombs' construction, was led by Kafeel Ahmed, who had studied engineering at several British universities including Queen's University Belfast.[10]

Similarly, one of the leaders of the sophisticated 2006 plot to use liquid explosives to blow up transatlantic airliners was Abdulla Ahmed Ali, a graduate of London's City University, of whose ISoc he had been president. Another of the plot's leaders was Waheed Zaman, a graduate of London Metropolitan University.[11] Similarly, the two leaders of the successful July 7, 2005 London bombings, Mohammed Siddique Khan and Shehzad Tanweer, had both attended Leeds Metropolitan University. These and other cases suggest that Abdulmutallab's radicalization at UCL was not an outlier; it was part of

1 "Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab: Report to UCL Council of Independent Inquiry Panel," University College London, September 2010, available at www.ucl.ac.uk/caldicott-enquiry/caldicottreport.pdf.

2 For the most complete account of Abdulmutallab's radicalization, see Alexander Meleagrou-Hitchens and Jacob Amis, "The Making of the Christmas Day Bomber," *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology* 10 (2010).

3 In the United Kingdom, a campus "Islamic Society," or "ISoc," is an independent university organization funded and run entirely by students. They are generally seen by university administrations as the *de facto* "representative" of Muslim students.

4 Adam Nossiter, "Lonely Trek to Radicalism for Terror Suspect," *New York Times*, January 16, 2010.

5 Duncan Gardham, Marcus Oscarsson and Peter Hutchison, "Sweden Suicide Bomber: Taimur Abdulwahab al-Abdaly Was Living in Britain," *Daily Telegraph*, December 12, 2010.

6 Personal interview, eyewitnesses, October 2010.

7 Shiv Malik, "NS Profile - Omar Sharif," *New Statesman*, April 24, 2006.

8 For instance, Dr. Nasim Ghani, a graduate of a London medical college, is now a leading organizer of Hizb al-Tahrir in Bangladesh.

9 Robin Simcox, Hannah Stuart and Houriya Ahmed, *Islamist Terrorism: The British Connections* (London: The Center for Social Cohesion, 2010), p. 329.

10 Steve Bird, "Profile: Kafeel Ahmed, Glasgow Attack Terrorist Who Burnt to Death," *The Times*, December 16, 2008.

11 "Profiles: Airline Plot Accused," BBC News, September 7, 2009.

a trend of university-educated radicals becoming involved in sophisticated terrorist plots.

A Case Study: London's City University

A striking example of the radicalization currently occurring on British university campuses is the events of the 2009-2010 academic year at City University,[12] a college of 21,000 students in central London that has a large population of local and foreign Muslim students.[13] During this period, the university's ISoc, which was led by mainly UK-born, South Asian-origin Salafists, created an atmosphere in which extremism could, and did, flourish. For instance, throughout the year, the ISoc's leaders gave Friday sermons in which they defended the principle "defensive and offensive jihad," denounced the "Western value system," endorsed homophobia as "Islamic" and called for the killing of Muslims who intentionally missed prayers.[14] Other sermons given by ISoc leaders advocated the creation of an "Islamic state" in which adulterers would be stoned to death. The ISoc's website re-published material by Abu Muhammed al-Maqdisi, the Jordanian al-Qa`ida theorist, and Ali al-Tamimi, a U.S. preacher convicted of terrorism ("May Allah hasten his release," in the words of the ISoc website). Into early 2010, the website also re-published writings by Anwar al-`Awlaqi, the wanted Yemeni-American cleric, who the ISoc had attempted to host via video-link the previous year. When al-`Awlaqi was reported killed in an airstrike in December 2009, the ISoc posted a message of support, writing "May Allah protect him and the Muslims" and predicting "there are many others like al-Aulaqi [sic], and if he dies a hundred more like him will arise, alhamdulillaah [praise be to God]." During the 2009-2010 academic year, City University's

ISoc also invited radical speakers to give campus talks—some of which were canceled following pressure from civil society groups and activists.[15]

The hard line Salafi-jihadi ideology propagated by City University's ISoc had immediate effects on campus. Jewish and homosexual students on campus reported being harassed by students suspected of being from the ISoc.[16] A police investigation into an attack on Muslim students by local youths collapsed after the ISoc discouraged Muslim eyewitnesses from assisting the "kuffar" police service.[17] The ISoc also sought to forcibly impose its views on Muslim students. For instance, in early 2010 the ISoc attempted to order female

> "Such 'sub-criminal extremism' is inherently difficult to tackle—not least because until a student commits an act of terrorism, their radicalization is generally only more or less hypothetical."

Muslim students to leave campus at 4 PM every day, while students also reported that some female Muslims had been forced to wear the *hijab*. The ISoc also prevented Muslims from using an "interfaith prayer room," a practice which they believed was *haram* (forbidden). Instead, they began holding Friday prayers in the university's main courtyard, a deliberately confrontational gesture that disrupted the university's academic work and is credited with increasing tensions between Muslim and non-Muslim students. ISoc members also sought to intimidate two university lecturers and students who had sought to draw public attention to

their activities.[18] One lecturer was so frightened by the ISoc's behavior that she considered contacting the police.

These events, which took place on a central London campus during the 2009-2010 academic year, illustrate the dangers that radical Islamists pose on British university campuses—both in terms of disrupting relations between Muslims and non-Muslims and in terms of increasing the risk of radicalization toward terrorism. They also show the challenges of preventing radicalization. For instance, although the ISoc's repeated promotion of extremism has undoubtedly increased the chances of terrorism, the police or the security services could do little to intervene as no laws were broken. Such "sub-criminal extremism" is inherently difficult to tackle—not least because until a student commits an act of terrorism, their radicalization is generally only more or less hypothetical.

Official Reaction

Despite the mounting evidence that British universities remain a crucible of extremism, the UK government has been slow to act. For instance, even after the 2005 London bombings, universities were largely excluded from the government's "Preventing Violent Extremism" program. Simultaneously, university vice-chancellors are struggling to face up to campus radicalization. "We all used to be radicals…Radicalization can be a good thing," this author was told by the vice-chancellor of one London university whose alumni have recently been involved in a number of terrorist plots.[19] Alarmingly, some universities have not only turned a blind eye to such extremism, but have actively defended such extremists. For instance, in early 2010 the national British media reported that Friday sermons in the campus prayer room at the London School of Economics were being given by a prominent member of HT, who is also a Ph.D. student and part-time lecturer at the university, who was

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12 The following material is partly drawn from a briefing paper co-written by this author. The paper is based on recordings of ISoc sermons, open-source material and interviews with a wide range of staff and students at City University. For the full paper, see "Radicalisation on British University Campuses: A Case Study," Quilliam Foundation, October 2010.

13 The university does not keep statistics on the percentage of Muslim students, but this is estimated by staff at between 10-20%. For more details, see ibid.

14 "'Taliban Rule' at British University," *Sunday Times*, October 17, 2010. Much of this data was also available on the ISoc's website, which has since been removed.

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15 "Muslim Students Continue Street Protests," Times Higher Education Supplement, March 16, 2010.

16 Jennifer Lipman, "London Campus was 'Launch Pad for Islamist Terrorism,'" *The Jewish Chronicle*, October 21, 2010.

17 For full details of these incidents, see "Radicalisation on British University Campuses: A Case Study."

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18 A sample of these problems can be seen in the following article in City's student newspaper, as well as in the comments that follow it: "City Islamic Society Defends Radical Preacher and Threatens the Inquirer," *The Inquirer*, January 2, 2010.

19 Personal interview, vice-chancellor, anonymous London university, January 2010.

using this platform to promote the group.[20] In response, the university issued a statement defending the HT member on the grounds that he had not said "anything unlawful during sermons at Friday prayers."[21] The student union also issued a press release in his defense, stating that "no-one should be subject to a media witch-hunt" and that "we stand with students and staff united in opposition to Islamophobia and racism on campus...and are united in opposition to the victimization of our colleagues."[22] Since then, Muslims attending LSE Friday prayers have said that this HT member still regularly uses his Friday sermons at LSE to advocate HT policy, promote HT events and even denounce critics by name—despite HT's documented involvement in several instances of university radicalization.[23] Many British universities appear to regard Islamist radicalization primarily as a public relations problem.

Conclusion and Outlook
The presence of radicalizing forces on British university campuses is clear. What is less clear is whether any action will be taken to combat it. Although the British prime minister has recently spoken of the need to "de-radicalize our universities," the barriers government must overcome are formidable.[24] For a start, even the most radical students rarely break the law, meaning that the police and security services are largely powerless to take action against such radicalization, even if it might ultimately lead to terrorism. Simultaneously, the left-leaning nature of British academia means that a right-leaning government has few natural allies on campus. At the same time, however, moderate students opposed to extremism, including many Muslims, have not yet found a way to stand up to campus radicals, particularly ones who control ISocs, have a monopoly over Friday sermons and, as in the case of LSE, are openly backed by university authorities. Moreover, once radicals have seized control of an ISoc or a prayer room, problems tend to self-perpetuate as this leadership appoints or grooms equally radical successors each year. There is also no official mechanism for taking radicals out of such leadership positions since ISocs are independent, student-run organizations.[25]

As a result of these trends, it is hard to see radicalization at British universities lessening any time soon. This will not only affect the security of the United Kingdom—individuals previously radicalized at British universities have beheaded American journalists in Pakistan, carried out suicide bomb attacks in Israel and, most recently, Sweden, aided radical movements through South Asia and elsewhere, and attempted to bomb U.S.-bound airliners. Ongoing radicalization at UK universities is not just a British problem, but a global one.

James Brandon is Head of Research at the Quilliam Foundation, a counter-extremism think-tank based in London.

Improving Airline Security in the United States

By Rafi Ron

ALMOST 10 YEARS after 9/11, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) recently introduced another technology system to improve airline security. Known as Advanced Imaging Technology (AIT), or "body scanners," the new devices created a public uproar over privacy concerns since the technology effectively sees through a subject's clothes during screening.[1] The AIT systems have been rapidly installed at airports across the United States in the wake of an attempted terrorist attack on a U.S.-bound airliner on December 25, 2009.

On that day, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, a young Nigerian Muslim, concealed a small explosive device in his underwear and boarded a flight departing from Lagos, Nigeria, connecting in Amsterdam to Detroit, Michigan. The young terrorist was on a "divine" mission to blow up the aircraft along with more than 200 passengers and crew over Detroit. His intention was to kill as many people as possible, including the unsuspecting Detroit suburban inhabitants on the ground. Luckily, due to his poor skills (rather than any security measures implemented at the airport) he failed his mission and ended up in a federal jail.

This incident has special significance for two reasons. First, Abdulmutallab's attempt revealed security failures at every layer—intelligence analysis, airport security, and the handling of the incident by the on-board crew as well as the handling of the plane by ground authorities.[2] Second, the attempted

20 Sean O'Neill, "Senior Member of Extreme Islamist Group Hizb ut-Tahrir Teaches at LSE," *The Times*, January 15, 2010.

21 "Statement on Mr Reza Pankhurst," London School of Economics, undated, available at www2.lse.ac.uk/intranet/news/internalNews/internalNews-Archive/2010/01/RPankhurst.aspx.

22 "Statement from the Students' Union Regarding Recent Media Attention," February 15, 2010, available at www.lse.oncampus.net/pages/representation/statement_on_mr_reza_pankhurst_.html.

23 Personal interviews, anonymous students, London, March-April 2010.

24 William Maclean, "Britain Admits Security Lapses After Sweden Blast," Reuters, December 15, 2010.

25 Although ISocs feature heavily in accounts of campus radicalization, this is not necessarily because of any intrinsic problem with ISocs. Rather, it is likely because radical groups often focus on taking over these societies and making them into vehicles for their own ideology; in effect, making them hubs of campus radicalization.

1 The alternative to body scanning, however, is arguably worse, as it involves intensive manual "pat downs" that under other circumstances would be considered a form of harassment.

2 For example, despite the grave situation on board, the captain reported to the ground that there was no need for any emergency procedures. As a result, the airport called off any emergency measures and the aircraft (carrying a detained terrorist and an unexploded device) was directed to a normal gate linked to the terminal (full of passengers and employees) with other aircraft close by. Passengers were allowed to disembark and mix with people present in the gate area without any screening

attack was almost a carbon copy of an incident that took place eight years earlier when another poorly skilled terrorist carried a similar explosive device (concealed in his shoe) on an American Airlines flight from Paris to Miami, earning his place in history as the "shoe bomber." What is alarming is that Abdulmutallab's attempted terrorist attack in 2009 represents a level of security failure worse than the one eight years earlier.

Similarities to the Shoe Bomber

The similarities between the two attacks are astounding. Both devices used pentaerythritol tetranitrate (PETN) as the main explosive material. Both contained no metal parts to avoid airport metal detection technology. Both used improvised detonators. Both were carried on the terrorist's body to avoid x-ray screening. Both explosives required some basic skill to detonate, which is why both terrorists failed.

On the human side, both Richard Reid (the "shoe bomber") and Abdulmutallab were inexperienced and were not able to avoid suspicion from people around them prior to the attack. Richard Reid, for example, drew suspicion from the security guard that interviewed him prior to checking in to his flight, to the point that French police were called in to interrogate him for more than two hours only to release him as a legitimate passenger. Missing the original flight as a result, he showed up the next day and once again the French police were summoned, although this time they cleared him to fly. Reid still drew further suspicion from the flight attendant at the aircraft door who described him as having a threatening appearance, as well as by the cabin attendant who reported to the senior flight attendant a "suspicious passenger" prior to takeoff.

In both cases, there were clear "red flags" in the way their journey was prepared. Both Reid and Abdulmutallab had one-way tickets, both paid the travel fare in cash, and both did not check any bags (for a transatlantic flight). Richard Reid twice failed a short interview conducted by a private security firm (hired by American Airlines as part of a procedure implemented on inbound flights to the

> ## "Reviewing all attempted attacks against U.S. aviation, a clear common denominator is identified. It is the failure of aviation security technology to detect and prevent terrorists from carrying out their missions successfully."

United States). Abdulmutallab was not subjected to this procedure as it had since been changed to address immigration concerns. Security aspects of his limited human encounter were minimized to checking his name against the "No Fly" and suspected terrorist watch lists. There is good reason to assume, based on his behavior after his arrest, that had Abdulmutallab been subjected to a professional security interview, he would have been flagged as "suspicious."

The TSA's conclusion from the "shoe bomber" attack in 2001 was disappointing and off the mark. It was characterized by a minimalist approach, defining the terrorist modus operandi (MO) as "carrying a bomb in shoes" rather than "carrying a bomb on the body." This reactive approach led to forcing passengers to take off their shoes and submitting them to x-ray screening. As a result, it left the door open to an al-Qa`ida operative and bombmaker based in Yemen to take advantage of it eight years later, sending Abdulmutallab with an explosive device concealed in his underwear. The only surprise, perhaps, is that it took al-Qa`ida eight years to repeat the attack.

Current Security Practices Inadequate

Reviewing all attempted attacks against U.S. aviation—starting with 9/11, including Richard Reid's shoe bomb attempt, the liquid explosives plot and Abdulmutallab's Christmas Day attack—a clear common denominator is identified. It is the failure of aviation security technology to detect and prevent terrorists from carrying out their missions successfully. In all of these attacks, the weapon or the explosive devices were smuggled through security checkpoints to the aircraft, or, as in the case of the liquid explosives plot, was luckily stopped by early intelligence as there was nothing at the airport that could have detected explosives in liquid form.

The problem started shortly after 9/11 when the TSA was created with the conviction that the terrorist threat could be met by improving the quality of the airport screening operation. Yet the notion that the terrorists' success on the morning of 9/11 was the result of a "screening failure" is misleading. At that time, box cutters and other sharp items were practically allowed on board. Even if such items were banned, however, there was still the open cockpit door and the FAA guideline for pilots to cooperate with hijackers; indeed, this would have led to the same tragic result.

Moreover, nine of the 19 terrorists on 9/11 were identified by a computerized (non-racial) profiling system called CAPPS, which was developed by the FAA and used by the airlines as a mandatory requirement. The response protocol to CAPPS selection of "high risk" passengers was an additional shallow "pat down," which was less than adequate to stop Muhammad `Atta and his team since they did not carry banned items.

In the aftermath of 9/11, the policy that was created and implemented to avoid another terrorist attack could be summarized as using screening technology to detect forbidden items prior to boarding the aircraft. The emphasis was on the use of technology to mitigate the threat. The other aspect of that policy was to avoid any form of discrimination; as a result, the search for banned items had to be carried out in a uniform manner. This policy,

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or questioning (ignoring the risk of a second terrorist on board). The wounded terrorist was detained by two law enforcement officers and was taken without any special security measures by ambulance to the nearest hospital. This chain of events is characterized by a lack of understanding of the situation and resulted in putting the public at risk of a potential disaster at the airport.

however, does not recognize different individual passenger risk levels.

Indeed, this policy has proven less than successful with all the attempted attacks since 9/11. After each attack, authorities have responded with small, reactive changes in policy. After 9/11, for example, a substantial portion of security resources was spent on confiscating small sharp items even after reinforced cockpit doors were introduced. After Richard Reid's shoe bomb attempt, security focused on footwear only, neglecting more intensive searches of the passenger's body. After the liquid explosives plot, authorities implemented a demanding policy of limiting quantities of liquids carried on board the plane, yet avoiding any response related to checked bags. It was only after the recent action by Abdulmutallab to carry a bomb on board in his underwear when authorities finally moved to deploying "full body scanners."

Clearly, the one conclusion that can be drawn with certainty is that there is an urgent need to find a more effective way to achieve "airport security." Steps need to be taken to put airport security one step ahead of the terrorists, rather than pursuing a reactive approach which characterizes the present strategy.

Applying the Israeli Model
A growing number of people in the U.S. government, the aviation industry, the media and the general public are pushing toward a strategy modeled on a real "risk-based" approach, or, in other words, "profiling." The proven success of the Israeli aviation security model, which is based on this approach, has drawn much attention, and it has become an attractive option to many in the United States. There is little dispute over the track record of the Israeli model, but most people who suggest its implementation "as is" are not fully familiar with it.

The Israeli model was developed and refined for use by Israeli aviation and tailored to address the unique conditions that exist in Israel. Largely speaking, it is based on the understanding that each passenger carries a different risk level and that the depth of security processing and search is adjusted to the individual's risk level. At the heart

of this model is an interview process with every single passenger by a highly skilled professional. The term "profiling" is usually used to describe this process.

The American environment, however, is different from the Israeli one in many ways. Therefore, one has to be cautious when attempting to implement a similar solution in the United States. For example, the ethnic profile of the majority of travelers on Israeli aviation is rather uniform compared to the plural ethnic profile of the American population. There are also a number of differences in

> **"By using the interview technique with the 'high risk' passengers, authorities can take advantage of the terrorists' 'Achilles heel': the difficulty in maintaining a 'cover story' in a professional interview situation."**

the legal environment between the U.S. constitution and Israeli law. There are differences in the volume of passenger traffic, as well as the fact that more than 80% of travelers on Israeli aviation are international travelers equipped with passports and other travel documents that contain significant information about the passenger and their flight history. Most flights to and from Israel are also long-haul flights, which require passengers to arrive at the airport three hours before departure—this allows authorities adequate time to complete a face-to-face interview process.

Having mentioned the above differences, the Israeli concept is still valid for the U.S. environment after some substantial and careful modifications. First, discriminating factors such as ethnicity, religion or gender must be removed to meet U.S. constitutional requirements. There is still enough behavioral information left to create effective profiles. Second, the 100% interview standard must be replaced with a robust

computerized (non-discriminating) security profiling program that would divide the passenger population into risk groups. The security checkpoint and baggage screening system would respond to the risk group level with a compatible level of search, including the use of highly professional face-to-face interviews for those passengers designated as "high risk."

The key to the success of this approach is that it preserves the ability to identify the risk where it exists and adjust the search level to achieve the most effective result. By using the interview technique with the "high risk" passengers, authorities can take advantage of the terrorists' "Achilles heel": the difficulty in maintaining a "cover story" in a professional interview situation.

It is never too soon to replace the current ineffective "one size fits all" approach with an effective "risk-based" strategy that builds on U.S. advantages and the terrorists' vulnerabilities.

Rafi Ron is a leading aviation security expert with more than 30 years of security and counterterrorism experience worldwide. He served as the Director of Security at Tel-Aviv Ben-Gurion International Airport and the Israeli Airport Authority from 1997 to 2001. Mr. Ron helped establish the EL-AL sky marshal program. Mr. Ron was hired by Massport immediately after 9/11 to upgrade security for Boston Logan Airport. Among the new programs he instituted was the development of the Behavior Pattern Recognition (BPR) protocol that helps authorities identify terrorists before they endanger airports or aviation travelers. In 2001, Mr. Ron formed New Age Aviation Security and New Age Security Solutions where he is president and CEO. In that capacity he manages aviation security related projects in the United States and internationally, including: threat and vulnerability studies, security planning, system design and integration, and training.

Al-Qa`ida's Yemeni Expatriate Faction in Pakistan

By Evan F. Kohlmann

EVER SINCE UMAR Farouk Abdulmutallab attempted to blow up a transatlantic commercial airliner on Christmas Day 2009, public attention has been firmly fixed on al-Qa`ida's latest regional franchise based in Yemen—a focus that has only increased in intensity following a subsequent cargo bomb plot thwarted in late 2010. Unbeknownst to many Americans, there is another prolific and deadly Yemeni terrorist network within al-Qa`ida that is operating far beyond the confines of the Arabian Peninsula. This network includes skilled bomb makers, martyrdom operatives, and senior commanders tightly ensconced with al-Qa`ida's top leadership in the rugged terrain on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. During the past year, these individuals have demonstrated their remarkable ingenuity, tech-savvy, and deadly precision. They have been linked to some of the most serious attacks to take place in the Afghan-Pakistani region, including the dramatic suicide bombing in late December 2009 that killed seven agents from the Central Intelligence Agency and a Jordanian intelligence officer at an Afghan forward operating base near the border with Pakistan.

The significance of the Yemeni terrorist network based in North Waziristan has gradually come into view during the past year due in large part to their public communications on internet web forums. Although these men range in age from their early 20s to late 40s, and despite the fact that they come from a country that is hardly known for its extensive web connectivity, these Yemeni nationals have taken to the online world with an unusual gusto, employing jihadist-themed social networking forums to broadcast biographies of "martyred" militants, to appeal for assistance and technical support, and to send messages back to al-Qa`ida fighters who are still based in Yemen.

This article profiles three operatives part of this network: Ghazwan al-Yemeni, Abu Dujanah al-Sanaani and Abu Abdelrahman al-Qahtani. The lesson of their stories is that despite the recent flurry of plots emanating from the Yemen-based al-Qa`ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), the threat from al-Qa`ida's core network in the Afghan-Pakistani border region remains just as potent, in part due to the ongoing role of Yemeni operatives in South Asia. Perhaps the only positive note is that many of the most prominent Yemeni personalities operating in South Asia are now dead, having been quietly removed in an unrelenting torrent of U.S. drone missile strikes and mysterious explosions.

Ghazwan al-Yemeni

The real danger posed by this expatriate Yemeni al-Qa`ida faction was only exposed in the aftermath of the December 30, 2009 suicide bombing targeting CIA agents at Camp Chapman—an attack carried out by a former jihadist web forum administrator from Jordan known as Abu Dujanah al-Khorasani (also known as Humam al-Balawi). While the CIA believed it had turned al-Balawi into a key and trusted asset, in the months leading up to his death the Jordanian was instead confidently reassuring his online friends, "when the love of jihad enters the heart of man, it will not leave him even if he wished it to…Can any sane person accept that? Not me."[1] During a scheduled meeting with his handlers at Camp Chapman to discuss the whereabouts of al-Qa`ida's deputy commander, Ayman al-Zawahiri, al-Balawi detonated a suicide bomb and single-handedly wiped out some of the CIA's most experienced personnel in the region.

Although the devastating attack was immediately claimed by the Pakistani Taliban, which produced a video of al-Balawi sitting alongside top Pakistani Taliban leader Hakimullah Mehsud, the Camp Chapman bombing nonetheless appeared to bear the telltale fingerprints of hard line foreign jihadists. The CIA quickly vowed to take revenge for its losses, and soon missiles began raining down from U.S. drone aircraft circling over Pakistan's tribal regions at an unprecedented rate. Early in the

evening of March 9, 2010, a group of suspected militants who had gathered at a mujahidin base near the town of Miran Shah in North Waziristan became the next target of the CIA's wrath.[2] A barrage of Hellfire missiles struck

> **"Al-Qa`ida's Yemeni expatriate faction based in North Waziristan has also apparently been working closely on the ground with high-profile European exiles who have likewise traveled to the region in hopes of joining al-Qa`ida and the Taliban."**

the compound, inflicting numerous casualties—including a Yemeni national in his early 30s with the name Saddam Hussein al-Hussami, better known under the pseudonym Ghazwan al-Yemeni. According to a senior U.S. official cited by the Associated Press, al-Yemeni was an al-Qa`ida leader who had "specialized in suicide operations" and was

> believed to have played a key role in the bombing of a CIA post in Afghanistan last December… [He] is considered an important al-Qaida planner and explosives expert who had established contact with groups ranging from al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula to Afghan and Pakistani Taliban militant groups.[3]

Less than four days after he was killed, tributes to Ghazwan al-Yemeni began pouring into online social networking forums frequented by jihadists. On March 13, administrators from the notorious Falluja Islamic Network issued a statement confirming that "the brave mujahid commander" had actually been a registered participating user in

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1 *Vanguards of Khorasan* 1:15 (2009).

2 Lolita Baldor and Matt Apuzzo, "Top Al Qaeda Operative Reportedly Killed In U.S. Drone Attack," Associated Press, March 17, 2010.

3 Ibid.

its own web-based chat forum.[4] The archived messages posted by Ghazwan al-Yemeni on the Falluja Islamic Network—the same online social networking venue preferred by CIA bomber Humam al-Balawi—offer an unprecedented inside look into his activities on the battlefield in Afghanistan. In early October 2009, al-Yemeni had posted a flurry of requests via the chat forum on behalf of "the Jalaluddin Haqqani Organization in the Shadow of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan."[5] In one such message, he appealed, "we, your brothers from the Jalaluddin Haqqani Organization, have encountered some problems in regards to the subjects Tawheed and Aqeedah, and we want the email or website of the renowned shaykhs in this field so we can direct to them our questions and seek fatwahs."[6] Another post from Ghazwan al-Yemeni highlighted an urgent need for translating "Shari`a and military guides printed in the Russian language...into Arabic. If you can assist me, whether with software, websites, or translators, may Allah reward you generously."[7]

Fellow mujahidin comrades of Ghazwan al-Yemeni from the frontline on the Afghan-Pakistani border added their own voices to the chorus of discussion. On March 12, 2010, a registered user on the Falluja Islamic Network calling himself "Abu Abdelrahman al-Qahtani in Waziristan" offered a first-person biography of the late Yemeni al-Qa`ida commander:

> We were not able to recover the first body until midnight, and our mujahid brother Ghazwan al-Yemeni [was one of the dead]. He had not even completed his third year [in jihad]. His journey with jihad and martyrdom began when he was captured in al-Haramain along with his traveling companion Azzam al-Yemeni, due to their activities and communications with their mujahidin brothers. He was in prison in Sana`a for a

long period of time and then he was released...He turned his gaze towards the precious land of...Afghanistan, passing through a third country where they stayed for a lengthy period awaiting entrance visas to Iran. Eventually, Allah permitted for them to enter, and from the first day here, they enrolled in the training camps...I remember the first time I saw him in Wana and he came to learn about explosives from an expert in the Afghani field—in fact, the expert of all aspects of jihad, as they were all the students of Abu Khabab al-Masri...eventually, he went back to North [Waziristan] and...settled in Miran Shah, where he organized and trained the Taliban and assisted in making preparations for many of their military needs.[8]

By all accounts, Ghazwan al-Yemeni had served as a key liaison and conduit between a variety of local armed jihadist factions, including al-Qa`ida, the Jalaluddin Haqqani network, and the up-and-coming Pakistani Taliban.

Abu Dujanah al-Sanaani
Less than two months later, mujahidin online chat forums again began to light up with discussion of the latest Yemeni national "martyred" in North Waziristan—Mohammed Naqaa al-Hamli, also known as Abu Dujanah al-Sanaani.[9] Indeed, the same voices who had expressed such personal grief over the passing of Ghazwan al-Yemeni stepped forward once again to acknowledge the fate of his brother-in-arms al-Hamli. Falluja Islamic Network user Abu Abdelrahman al-Qahtani issued an announcement on March 9 to

> the members of the Falluja forum [about] the joyful news regarding the martyrdom of your brother from the forum, Abu Dujanah al-Sanaani, may almighty Allah have mercy upon him and...allow him to join his fellow brethren. The brother was preparing himself for a martyrdom operation in Kabul.[10]

A follow-up statement posted later that day by another user, "al-Qairawani," repeated that "Abu Hatem Mohammed Naqaa' Qaed al-Hamli al-Yemeni (Abu Dujanah al-Sanaani) has...passed away in the evening due to his severe injuries. These were caused by the premature detonation of an explosive device he was preparing to roast the flesh of Allah's enemies, the crusaders and apostates."[11] Al-Qairawani claimed to have

> participated with him for three years in actions and operations, and I only knew him to be a brave, heroic man, and a roaring lion who had no fear of death. May Allah have mercy on him, he specialized in the science of explosives and he mastered it to the point that he became a reference to all the brothers in this regard. In this field, he demonstrated a degree of ingenuity that distinguished him and was of great benefit to the mujahidin. He also worked to spread this art and teach it to the rest of the mujahidin, and he left behind him, praise to Allah, a number of brilliant Taliban students.[12]

In an interview with the online jihadist media outfit "al-Balagh" only days before his death, Abu Dujanah al-Sanaani introduced himself as

> from the children of Hijja province, the municipality of Khiran bani Hamla; a graduate from Sana`a University, and a teacher at the Ministry of Education. I studied Shariah education at al-Iman University, which is headed by Shaykh Abdulmajid al-Zindani...I am married and I have one daughter and two sons.[13]

He insisted that "thoughts of my family and children" would not cause him any hesitation in carrying out a "martyrdom operation":

> No, as my trust in Allah is very big...I phoned my wife and I asked

4 This information was available at www.alfaloja.net/vb/showthread.php?t=107824 on March 13, 2010.

5 This information was available at www.alfaloja.net/vb/showthread.php?t=86082 on October 1, 2009.

6 This information was available at www.alfaloja.net/vb/showthread.php?t=86086 on October 1, 2009.

7 This information was available at www.alfaloja.net/vb/showthread.php?t=86082 on October 1, 2009.

8 This information was available at www.alfaloja.net/vb/showthread.php?t=107512 on March 12, 2010.

9 This information was available at www.alfaloja.net/vb/showthread.php?t=115776 on May 9, 2010.

10 This information was available at www.alfaloja.net/

vb/showthread.php?t=115649 on May 9, 2010.

11 This information was available at www.alfaloja.net/vb/showthread.php?t=115776 on May 9, 2010.

12 Ibid.

13 This information was available at www.alfaloja.net/vb/showthread.php?t=116142 on May 11, 2010.

her to keep praying to Allah to grant me martyrdom, moving on and not returning, and she promised me she would do that, may Allah reward her goodness… No, there's no part of me feeling hesitation or weakness, but… to the contrary, I feel saddened in putting it off any further…We promised the infidels, when our brother Ghazwan al-Yemeni was killed, that we would strike back twice as hard in response, and this operation, Allah-willing, will be an unforgettable lesson to the infidels.[14]

Just like Ghazwan al-Yemeni, Abu Dujanah al-Sanaani was also a prolific contributor to web-based jihadist social networking forums, particularly the Falluja Islamic Network. In January 2010, he posted a lengthy open diatribe addressed to his former mentor, Shaykh `Abd al-Majid al-Zindani, in Yemen. At first, the message took a respectful, if not congenial tone:

I give you the good news that we are here on the land of Khorasan (Afghanistan)…Every day we excel in power and number and equipment while our enemy is humiliated and degraded. I assure you about the conditions of my comrades, the students from al-Iman University; they are in the frontline on the battlefields against the cross-worshippers. Your students here and in Iraq are leading the mujahidin with their Shari`a knowledge, which they learnt from you…You were cautious to raise young men who support this religion and sacrifice for its sake, and here is the land of Afghanistan which can testify to that.[15]

Despite these rather friendly opening words, Abu Dujanah then suddenly veered into a sharp and personal attack on al-Zindani's credibility as a Muslim leader:

My Shaykh, I was preparing explosive devices in order to kill Allah's enemies—the cross-worshippers and their apostate

puppets—when I heard on the radio that the well-known activist Abdulmajid al-Zindani has declared that any American interference in Yemen is considered occupation, and in a speech he calls for jihad [only] when an American force invades Yemen!…Are you still ignorant and unaware that America invaded the Arabian countries a long time ago and first of all in Yemen?…You did not do a thing! Excuse me my shaykh, you have reached an older age so when will you leave politics…Please, stand with yourself and redeem yourself before it's too late, and we are ready to support you with people and equipment; O' shaykh, be devout to Allah and come to the frontline to fight the enemies of Allah.[16]

He continued to demand that al-Zindani "besiege the American Embassy" with a group of his followers, further suggesting that "a group of brothers [should] take control over the airbase in Sana`a," "besiege the Republican Palace in Yemen," "carry an operation against the apostates in the Gold Mohur [Hotel] in Aden," and "storm the Ministry of Interior and kill the apostates there and the Interior Minister." He closed with, "This is what we wish for and want to see in the faith and wisdom valleys of Yemen…Your brother, Abu Dujanah al-Sanaani (Afghanistan)."[17]

The Yemeni bombmaker was much more approving in his web commentary when it came to the merits of recent military operations carried out by al-Qa`ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). When al-Qa`ida attempted to assassinate the British ambassador to Yemen in April 2010, Abu Dujanah al-Sanaani posted a public message of solidarity with his Yemeni brothers-in-arms:

O' lions of jihad, even if the British dog escaped from your swords this time, don't slacken in your persistent efforts against the infidels and apostates so that they will receive their share of your arrows…and that day will be coming soon…from Abu Dujanah al-Sanaani in Afghanistan.[18]

As for the military operations taking place on the battlefield where he was based, Abu Dujanah informed his online audience in March 2010 that "what is mentioned in the news is just the tip of the iceberg, and our enemies are reeling from their successive defeats, praise be to Allah. In Pakistan, the government retreats each day under the painful blows of the mujahidin, and the same is true in Afghanistan."[19] He warned of

armed drone aircraft…dispatched by the enemies of Allah…which fly across the sky of Waziristan, and an army of spies on the ground in the tribal areas as well, seeking to obtain intelligence data on the location of the mujahidin…and so, the infidels were able to kill many of our fighters, especially those of Arab origin and other non-Arab foreign fighters.[20]

Abu Abdelrahman al-Qahtani
Perhaps a testament to the deadly effectiveness of U.S. drone missile strikes, by this past November even those above Ghazwan al-Yemeni and Abu Dujanah al-Sanaani in the hierarchy of al-Qa`ida's Yemeni expatriate contingent found their lives in jeopardy. Abu Abdelrahman al-Qahtani was not only a registered user on the Falluja Islamic Network, but was also a 45-year-old Yemeni national who had spent "half of [his life] in the fields of jihad."[21] Al-Qahtani reportedly first arrived in Afghanistan during the late 1980s and "fought the communist Russians during the days of the Soviet invasion—and after the order came for mobilization after the American Crusade attack…he went back to the land of Khorasan to fight the Americans just as he fought the Russians before."[22]

Despite being relatively older, al-Qahtani was nonetheless sharply attuned to the value of internet-based communications, and relied on web chat forums to disseminate news updates and recruitment calls carefully crafted to target an online audience. In February

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14 Ibid.
15 This information was available at www.alfaloja.net/vb/showthread.php?t=100239 on January 18, 2010.

16 Ibid.
17 Ibid.
18 This information was available at www.alfaloja.net/

vb/showthread.php?t=113444 on April 25, 2010.
19 This information was available at www.alfaloja.net/vb/showthread.php?t=106985 on March 10, 2010.
20 Ibid.
21 This information was available at www.shamikh1.net/vb/showthread.php?t=84143 on December 9, 2010.
22 Ibid.

2010, he took pains to emphasize that a "major operation" had recently taken place in North Waziristan which "included a number of beloved users from the jihadi forums—among them, your brother 'Abu Kandahar [al-Zarqawi],'[23] brother 'Ansar 13,' and brother 'Khattab al-Lubnani.' All of them send you their greetings and salutations, and [advise you] not to forget them in your prayers."[24]

On the evening of November 16, 2010, in the midst of Eid celebrations, more missiles fired from a U.S. drone demolished a makeshift mujahidin encampment on the Afghan border, killing several fighters—including Abu Abdelrahman al-Qahtani. According to a statement posted on jihadist web forums, "Allah awarded them to spend Eid there in the highest levels of Paradise, with their beloved ones and brothers Ghazwan al-Yemeni, Abu Dujanah al-Sanaani, and Abu Dujanah al-Khorasani. Just as He gathered them in life, He has gathered them in the afterlife."[25] The author of the statement confessed that in being tasked to "bring you the glad tidings about the martyrdom of our brother Abu Abdelrahman al-Qahtani al-Yemeni…I write and the words refuse to come out of heart; as it is not easy to mourn your beloved, and it is not easy to receive like this news without your body shaking and your emotions disturbed." For anyone still unclear, he again confirmed, "Brother Abu Abdelrahman was the one together with us on the Falluja [network]."[26]

Networking with European Fighters?
In a rather disturbing twist, al-Qa`ida's Yemeni expatriate faction based in North Waziristan has also apparently been working closely on the ground with high-profile European exiles who have likewise traveled to the region in hopes of joining al-Qa`ida and the Taliban. The web statement announcing the death of Abu Abdelrahman al-Qahtani advised

"those who seek more information about the martyrdom of the brother" to "correspond with my beloved brother al-Qairawani"—who is, in fact, the same online forum user who previously had helped spread details about the untimely passing of Abu Dujanah al-Sanaani in an accidental explosion.[27] Al-Qairawani has indicated, in separate posts, that he is currently fighting with the mujahidin in Afghanistan and "used to live in Europe." He has further acknowledged that "my family and a number of our brothers were on trial in Brussels." In one case, he vividly described to fellow online jihadists how he was "rushing to reach one of the call centers before they closed, because I was hoping to learn some news from one of the internet websites" about the progress of the trial taking place back in Belgium.[28] Based on the rather specific personal details and hints volunteered over time by al-Qairawani, his real identity appears to be that of most-wanted Tunisian national Moez Garsallaoui, an extremist who left Belgium for Pakistan's tribal areas in late 2007.[29] Garsallaoui is the husband of the notorious "black widow" Malika el-Aroud, who reportedly posted a statement on the web on his behalf in September 2008, urging Muslims in Europe that "the solution, my brothers and sisters, is not fatwas but boooooooms."[30]

Conclusion
There are a number of important lessons to be learned from the cases of Ghazwan al-Yemeni, Abu Dujanah al-Sanaani, Abu Abdelrahman al-Qahtani, and their various other contemporaries within the Yemeni mujahidin network perched on the Afghan-Pakistani border. The degree to which these hard line foreign fighters have become closely intertwined with local allies from the Pakistani Taliban and the Jalaluddin Haqqani network could be quite problematic in the long-term, especially if the United States hopes to scale back its military forces deployed in the region.

It may be tempting in the wake of Abdulmutallab's attack and the most recent cargo jet bomb plot in late 2010 to shift attention away from the activities of al-Qa`ida operatives in Pakistan and Afghanistan to their ambitious ideological cousins in Yemen, or other regional hotspots. Yet just like AQAP, the Yemeni expatriate network in South Asia is equally dedicated to the principle of launching pinpoint strikes on their enemies—on a global scale—and have mobilized extensive resources to actualize their mission, including networking with European recruits and spreading their viral message on sympathetic internet social networking forums. These men hardly fit the popular stereotype of bedraggled buffoons hiding in remote mountain caves. Defanging this evolving terrorist threat will require the U.S. government to maintain an aggressive tempo of action, including the use of controversial-but-demonstrably-effective tactics such as drone missile strikes. Although the Yemeni al-Qa`ida contingent has undoubtedly suffered a series of debilitating losses during the past 12 months, if focus should start to stray, it is only a matter of time before a new group of fresh recruits will step forward to help fill the void.

Evan F. Kohlmann is a Senior Partner at Flashpoint Global Partners, a New York-based security consulting firm. He is the author of Al-Qaida's Jihad in Europe: The Afghan-Bosnian Network.

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23 On December 18, 2010, other users on jihadist web forums announced the death of "Abu Kandahar al-Zarqawi" (also known as Jordanian national Haithem bin Mohammed al-Khayat) during renewed clashes on the Afghan-Pakistani border.
24 This information was available at www.alfaloja.net/vb/showthread.php?t=101792 on February 3, 2010.
25 This information was available at www.shamikh1.net/vb/showthread.php?t=84143 on December 9, 2010.
26 Ibid.

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27 Ibid.
28 This information was available at www.alfaloja.net/vb/showthread.php?t=124200 on June 22, 2010.
29 Nic Robertson and Paul Cruickshank, "Belgian 'al Qaeda Cell' Linked to 2006 Airline Plot," CNN, February 10, 2009.
30 Ibid.

Understanding Al-Qa`ida's Business Model

By Alex Gallo

DURING THE PAST four years, two seemingly distinct and ostensibly contradictory narratives have emerged regarding the capability, positioning, and operational strategy of al-Qa`ida. On the one hand, many government leaders and counterterrorism experts have asserted that al-Qa`ida is weakening and too impotent to conduct large-scale attacks—as evidenced by the dearth of al-Qa`ida fighters in Afghanistan, its decreasing financial coffers, and its perceived operational incompetence in executing major attacks against the United States and the West. On the other hand, there are clear examples of al-Qa`ida's ability to successfully influence and facilitate smaller scale attacks against the United States and around the world—as evidenced by Nidal Hasan's attack at Fort Hood, the recent airliner packages plot, and Umar Farouk Abdulmuttallab's attempted attack on an airliner near Detroit on Christmas Day 2009.

How does one reconcile these seemingly paradoxical reflections of al-Qa`ida and gain greater conceptual clarity into how al-Qa`ida has evolved as an organization?

Understanding Al-Qa`ida Today
Analysts and policymakers alike tend to use "yesterday's metrics when trying to comprehend al-Qa`ida today," which can lead to faulty assumptions and a flawed analysis that the al-Qa`ida-led global jihadist movement is weaker, ineffectual, or less viable than it likely is.[1] Analysts and policymakers often measure al-Qa`ida's effectiveness through the number of attacks, number of fighters, and lethality of attacks.[2] For example, many analysts argue that al-Qa`ida only has a couple hundred operatives in Afghanistan and Pakistan.[3] While this may be true, al-Qa`ida does not have to fight in Afghanistan

because it can rely on other militant groups to perform this role. Many policymakers argue that al-Qa`ida is receiving increasingly diminished financing from the global diaspora of jihadist sympathizers.[4] Yet, al-Qa`ida has adapted its "business model" accordingly (thereby diminishing its cost structure) and no longer has to acquire as much money to fund operations. Still others contend that al-Qa`ida is contained in Pakistan due to the U.S. drone aircraft program.[5] While this also may be true, these dynamics do not necessarily indicate that al-Qa`ida cannot facilitate the violence of its franchises, as well as other jihadist actors, to launch attacks against the United States. In short, all of these reflections of al-Qa`ida's situational context are correct—yet to assert that al-Qa`ida no longer possesses the capacity to foment violence or lacks relevancy in the global jihadist movement suggests a fundamental misunderstanding of the strategic advantages associated with the group's unique positioning within that movement today. Therefore, while these metrics can prove useful in understanding the capacity of al-Qa`ida to launch attacks independently, they do little in providing insight into al-Qa`ida's senior leadership's positioning within the global jihad, current organizational strategy, or consciousness of the exogenous environment in which they are operating today.

Unraveling the Paradox
These seemingly inconsistent and paradoxical understandings of al-Qa`ida today are, in part, due to a tendency to evaluate al-Qa`ida one-dimensionally and apart from a broader context, and an under-appreciation of the fact that al-Qa`ida has fundamentally shifted its organizational approach as well as its parochial/elitist goals within the global jihad. Rather than a one-dimensional, exclusively metric-based approach to understanding al-Qa`ida, the organization should be viewed as operating within a highly competitive environment via-a-vis other jihadist groups—not to mention the United

States. To remain relevant and to endure as a leading jihadist brand, al-Qa`ida must diversify to survive and evolve in order to thrive; it must diversify toward leveraging other groups to carry out its violent agenda against the United States and the West, and it must evolve toward focusing on its unique value within the global jihad given its history, branding, and increasingly constrained environment due to U.S. counterterrorism efforts.

In fact, al-Qa`ida's senior leadership does not even evaluate itself through the threat-based metrics that Western analysts tend to use to evaluate them. Instead, al-Qa`ida's senior leadership evaluates the exogenous environment in which they operate, and then dynamically looks inward to their organization to derive the most optimistic outcome given the reality of their constraining context. This multifaceted and emotionally intelligent capability of al-Qa`ida's senior leadership to understand the world around them and optimize the outcome within a given context exemplifies the very essence of al-Qa`ida's aptitude to survive. To be sure, analysis of al-Qa`ida should begin via traditional, observable metrics; however, analysis cannot stop there. Analysts must situate al-Qa`ida within a broader competitive context and observe how al-Qa`ida is positioning itself within the highly competitive jihadist landscape in which it operates to gain insight into how al-Qa`ida's senior leadership: 1) views itself internally, 2) operates within the milieu of global jihadist groups, and 3) positions its unique and differentiated value to the overall global jihadist movement. One can begin to gain clarity in this manner by analyzing al-Qa`ida through the lens of a business and how it captures value for the overall global jihadist enterprise.

Al-Qa`ida's Business Model" and its Positioning within the Value Chain Framework
To gain greater conceptual clarity into al-Qa`ida today, one must assess al-Qa`ida's unique value, differentiated role, and strategic positioning within the competitive landscape of the global jihadist enterprise as well as how it maintains its relevancy within the milieu of militant groups engaged in local, regional, and irredentist jihad. This

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1 Lieutenant Colonel Reid Sawyer used this phrasing in a conversation with the author within the context of his perspective on the evolution of al-Qa`ida in March 2010.
2 Ibid.
3 Sami Yousafzai and Ron Moreau, "Inside al-Qa`ida," *Newsweek*, September 4, 2010.

4 Greg Bruno, "Al-Qaeda's Financial Pressures," Council on Foreign Relations, February 1, 2010.
5 Kristen Chick, "CIA Director Says Al Qaeda on the Run as Leader Killed in Drone Strike," *Christian Science Monitor*, March 18, 2010.

analysis could provide a unique window of insight into how al-Qa`ida views itself and its unique value proposition to the global jihadist enterprise.

Ordinarily applied to business enterprises, Michael Porter conceptualized the value chain framework to describe the spectrum of activities in which value is captured and competitive advantage furthered. Porter's framework presents a continuum of value-creating activities that an enterprise can be engaged in, including reception, production, and distribution of raw materials in addition to marketing and professional services. Porter argues that competitive advantage is ultimately realized through optimizing and coordinating these linked, value-creating activities.[6]

In considering Porter's framework, one can observe that al-Qa`ida continues to engage in all aspects of value-creating activity within the milieu of the violent jihadist enterprise—from recruiting "raw material" recruits for violence to marketing its brand and expertise to other jihadist actors. Due to constraints on al-Qa`ida's freedom of movement imposed by the United States and Pakistan, al-Qa`ida's leadership appears to have made a calculated decision to privilege its organizational branding and expertise and, thereby, move along the value chain toward almost exclusively engaging in professional consulting or advisory entrepreneurial activity. As a result, this positioning relieves al-Qa`ida from bearing the cost—opportunity or otherwise—of violent activity in Afghanistan, Pakistan, or around the world. Al-Qa`ida core has effectively de-emphasized the resource-intensive portion of value-creating activity (training, equipping, and deploying fighters around the world) and is leveraging other violent movements to carry out these operational activities. Al-Qa`ida provides value as a consultancy in two critical ways: by serving as a financial adviser and facilitator to the global jihadist financial coffers, and by providing the ideological coherence within the global jihadist movement.[7]

To that end, al-Qa`ida core appears to have largely abandoned investing its resources in the raw materials (or recruiting fighters), production (or training and indoctrination), and distribution (or global jihadist violence) portion of the value chain—for now.

To that end, al-Qa`ida's approach to the Afghan jihad is a microcosm of how al-Qa`ida actualizes its "professional services" role more broadly. Al-Qa`ida operatives have a small footprint in Afghanistan because they do not have to act on their own there: they can simply leverage and facilitate the violence of their jihadist brethren. In al-Qa`ida's assessment, militant groups in Afghanistan still would be fighting the perceived U.S. occupation regardless of whether al-Qa`ida existed or not. To that end, al-Qa`ida is largely abdicating the responsibility of violently resisting the

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United States on the battlefield to other jihadist actors in Afghanistan, thereby promoting its expertise as a leading brand in the global jihad and solidifying its relevancy to, and underpinning the purpose of, violent defensive jihad. Al-Qa`ida is leveraging this critical dynamic to further part of its grand strategy and compel the United States to change its foreign policy and remove itself from traditionally Muslim lands by providing train-the-trainer expertise, financial networks, strategic communication

infrastructure, and ideological support to materially shape the very nature of the violence in Afghanistan as well as the manner in which the jihadist community understands the Afghan jihad. While al-Qa`ida's presence appears to be small, the impact of its presence is reverberating across Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the West. Al-Qa`ida provides vital resiliency and ideological ammunition to the Afghan jihad through providing critical services that these groups could not provide as robustly themselves, while concurrently providing ideological cohesion to the global jihadist movement. In other words, al-Qa`ida is actualizing its operational ends via a consultancy approach.

For example, Fazul Abdullah Mohammad (also known as Fadil Harun), believed to be a leading al-Qa`ida operative in East Africa, noted in his book *War Against Islam* that although he did not want to become a formal member of al-Shabab, he was nevertheless prepared to work with them.[8] Fazul essentially saw himself as a consultant to al-Shabab on behalf of al-Qa`ida; someone who "helps every Muslim who desires jihad; we train him and offer him advice about the truth of jihad."[9] Fazul took it upon himself to consult with al-Shabab in establishing, among other things, advanced training courses for the elite forces, specialized courses to train snipers, courses in information technology and spying, as well as establishing a budget.[10] Therefore, al-Qa`ida core leverages other militant actors, including its affiliates, to conduct these efforts.[11] Al-Qa`ida realizes that the resource intensive (or recruiting, training, equipping, and deploying) portion of the value chain does not embody its value proposition to the global jihadist effort—particularly because it no longer possesses the freedom of maneuver to conduct these efforts due to the U.S. drone campaign in Pakistan and global counterfinancing efforts. In short, al-Qa`ida understands that given the constrained context in

6 Michael E. Porter, *Competitive Advantage: Creating and Sustaining Superior Performance* (New York: The Free Press, 1985).

7 Fadil Harun, *War Against Islam (al-Harb 'ala al-Islam)*

2, 2009, p. 69, translated by Dr. Nelly Lahoud; "Treasury Targets Taliban and Haqqani Network Leadership: Treasury Designates Three Financiers Operating in Afghanistan and Pakistan," U.S. Treasury Department, July 22, 2010.

8 Harun, p. 69.

9 Ibid., p. 138.

10 Ibid., pp. 69-70.

11 Examples include al-Qa`ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), al-Shabab, Lashkar-i-Tayyiba (LeT), Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), the Haqqani network, the Islamic Jihad Union, and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) to name a few.

which it exists today, it is able to provide more robust and enduring value (and solidify its long-term relevancy) to the global jihadist movement through its unique infrastructure and expertise in the marketing (media and fundraising) and services (provision of strategic vision, outreach, advising, and consulting services) portion of the value chain activities.

Al-Qa`ida's professional services business model extends beyond the Afghanistan context. Globally, al-Qa`ida core has been able to amplify, foment, and re-orient the violence of local and nationalist jihadist groups through consultation with and augmentation of other militant jihadist groups. Al-Qa`ida uniquely understands how to play this role effectively, even though

> **"By trying to stand for everything and by appealing to populist jihadist sentiment, the al-Qa`ida-led jihadist movement may come to stand for nothing and implode due to conflicting interests and risky ideological rhetoric."**

these groups may not wholly share the same agenda due to their shared experiences and ideological vision from the anti-Soviet jihad in the 1980s. These local jihadist groups' membership often includes veterans of the anti-Soviet jihad who serve as a bridge between al-Qa`ida core and the local jihadist groups. In other cases, these groups require augmentation for specialized skills and/or resources that they cannot provide for themselves. Yet, in all cases, al-Qa`ida core has been able to demonstrate the ability to provide value to these groups and, in doing so, nest the local, regional, or irredentist grievance of these groups within their global jihadist narrative.[12]

The Efficacy of the Al-Qa`ida Consultancy Model

Advantages

By positioning itself as a professional services or consultancy entity, al-Qa`ida is able to be an effective player within the global jihad—even within the constrained security paradigm in Pakistan. Moreover, al-Qa`ida's return on investment (given its limited freedom to invest in jihad) is higher than it would be anywhere else along the value chain because resource "costs" (financial and human capital) are generally lower due to the nature of the consulting business model.

Al-Qa`ida must continually ensure that it remains relevant to these local and regional jihadist groups; in exchange, these groups effectively "are" the al-Qa`ida movement. Thus, al-Qa`ida's consultancy approach allows it to credibly claim that it is actively engaged in waging violence against the "far enemy" across the globe, while remaining unburdened by the actual costs associated with waging the violence. Moreover, this approach ensures that a local face remains fully imprinted on violence in each theater, thereby increasing the resiliency and legitimacy of various insurgencies; this is a crucial lesson learned from al-Qa`ida's experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan. At present, al-Qa`ida core's reliance on leveraging networked and affiliated organizations presents a strength, but also a potential weakness to ensuring the longevity of the movement.

Disadvantages

Today, al-Qa`ida cannot lead within the global jihadist movement without providing unique capacities to these groups (media and financial networks), remaining relevant to their grievances, and connected to the realities of their local or regional environment. Ultimately, local groups have the freedom to operate in the manner that they see fit. This can be detrimental to the integrity of al-Qa`ida's brand if, like Abu Mus`ab al-Zarqawi in Iraq, their mismanagement damages al-Qa`ida's global image.[13] As a result, while al-Qa`ida core appears to be

successful in inspiring, promoting, and re-orienting the violence of its jihadist brethren, actually remaining relevant continues to be a significant challenge and vulnerability for the group. In recognition of this challenging dynamic of their consultancy business model, al-Qa`ida's speeches have taken on a more populist tone by lamenting the lack of aid for the floods in Pakistan and blaming the United States and other industrialized states for global warming.[14] While this rhetorical approach has led to more diversity within the current ranks of jihadists, al-Qa`ida's brand runs the risk of becoming adulterated as it tries to incorporate and cohere together the increasingly diverse and fragmented nature of the global jihad. In short, by trying to stand for everything and by appealing to populist jihadist sentiment, the al-Qa`ida-led jihadist movement may come to stand for nothing and implode due to conflicting interests and risky ideological rhetoric.

Conclusion

The fundamental consequence of al-Qa`ida's evolution toward this consultancy business model is that the jihadist profile and the type of groups who attempt to attack the United States will increasingly become fragmented, diffuse, and unpredictable. In fact, Faisal Shahzad's attempted attack in Times Square on behalf of the Pakistani Taliban arguably could be viewed as the ultimate manifestation of al-Qa`ida's success as a consultancy because the Pakistani Taliban's violence was opportunistically and successfully reoriented toward the U.S. homeland for the first time. Hakimullah Mehsud validated this point in a statement released after the Times Square attack by situating the group's fight against the Pakistani state within al-Qa`ida's grievance narrative.[15] As a result, the Times Square attack shows the increasingly global orientation of a local jihadist group, which can be attributed to al-Qa`ida's positioning within the services portion of the value chain, allowing it to possess greater ideational influence over jihadist actors such as the Pakistani Taliban. In aggregate,

12 Scott Helfstein, "The Third Way: A Paradigm for Influence in the Marketplace of Ideas," *CTC Sentinel* 3:6 (2010).

13 "Letter from Ayman al-Zawahiri to Abu Musab al-Zarqawi," U.S. Office of the Director of National Intelligence, July 9, 2005.

14 Wissam Keyrouz, "Bin Laden Concerned by Climate Change, Pakistan Floods – New Audiotape," Agence France-Presse, October 2, 2010.

15 Don Rassler, "Al-Qa`ida's Pakistan Strategy," *CTC Sentinel* 2:6 (2009).

the reorientation of local, regional, and irredentist jihadist actors could create a critical mass that overwhelms U.S. counterterrorism systems and, in al-Qa`ida's view, a policy change that removes the United States from supporting regimes that jihadists have declared to be apostate in the Arab world.

At a micro-level, it is this shift by al-Qa`ida toward the services end of the value chain that, at a macro-level, has materially altered the very nature of the violence toward the United States as well as the strategic "feel" of the global jihadist movement. These micro and associated macro level shifts are, in part, a reflection of the success of the U.S. counterterrorism campaign, but it also embodies a paradigmatic evolution in jihadist violence that will offer unique challenges for law enforcement to precisely identify and target future threats to the homeland.

In the final analysis, this symbiotic co-evolution of al-Qa`ida, and the broader jihadist milieu in which it exists, exemplifies the dynamism and complexity of the challenge that U.S. law enforcement and counterterrorism professionals currently face. To combat against this continued disaggregated threat, counterterrorism and law enforcement practitioners in the United States must rigorously comprehend both al-Qa`ida's grievance narrative as well as the grievance narratives and associated trajectories of a myriad of local, regional, and irredentist jihadist groups who are situating their violence within al-Qa`ida's global jihadist vision.

Alex Gallo is an associate at the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point.

Disengagement or Deradicalization: A Look at Prison Programs for Jailed Terrorists

By Andrew Silke

AT NO TIME in the past 50 years has there been as much interest in the idea of deradicalizing terrorists as today.[1] Programs to deradicalize those linked to al-Qa`ida have been established in multiple countries, with the hope that reforming these extremists is possible.[2] Nevertheless, doubts remain over the effectiveness of these programs. This uncertainty is only heightened by the chronic lack of proper evaluations on almost any of the programs involved. Adding to the difficulty is confusion over how to define the goals of the programs. Should they seek to merely disengage subjects from violence and other illegal activity? Or should they actually "deradicalize" a subject, which would mean a complete shift in the prisoner's mindset, sympathies and attitudes?

This article assesses the differences between disengagement and deradicalization. It suggests that deradicalizing prisoners—which requires changing their mindset and ideological beliefs—is exceedingly difficult, and it finds that disengagement is likely a more realistic outcome.

Past Precedents

In protracted terrorist conflicts, many states eventually come to recognize the value of giving active terrorists a third option. The first option is continued involvement in the terrorist group and in terrorist activity. Option two is death or incarceration at the hands of the state. The third option is effectively a "get out" clause that allows individuals to put their involvement in a conflict behind them without having to face the severe penalties normally meted out by the state.

The third option is usually not completely pain free. Some jail time is normal, but it is not as prolonged or austere as that for detained terrorists who do not join the program. The classic example of this approach is the highly successful *dissociati* scheme introduced in Italy.[3] As the 1980s progressed, it was clear that the terrorist campaigns in Italy were in terminal decline. In 1987, a new dissociation law was introduced to help bring closure to the conflict. Prisoners were not immediately released under the scheme, but were instead allowed to work outside prison while serving their sentence. The prisoners were thus allowed to put their pasts behind them and move to a less restricted prison regime that also allowed them to begin to lay the foundations for life after release. The dissociated prisoners were expected to express genuine remorse for their actions, and to sever their links with the terrorist organization. The prisoners also had to make a full and frank confession of the crimes in which they had been involved—including crimes for which they had not been convicted. The scheme proved so successful that many terrorists who were still at large surrendered themselves to authorities so that they could enter the program and close the chapter on their terrorist lives.[4]

In 1982, Spain introduced a similar policy termed "social reinsertion."[5] The policy was first introduced when the ETA Político-Militar (ETA-PM) split into two factions, with one advocating non-violence while the other promoted a continuation of the terrorist campaign. Prisoners who identified with the non-violent faction could apply through the courts for early release. The prisoners were essentially offered an amnesty for their crimes, although this was not officially acknowledged.[6]

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1 See, for example, Tore Bjorgo and John Horgan, *Leaving Terrorism Behind* (London: Routledge, 2008); Omar Ashour, *The De-Radicalization of Jihadists: Transforming Armed Islamist Movements* (London: Routledge, 2010).

2 This is the case regardless of whether these individuals are members of what has come to be called al-Qa`ida core or whether they belong to groups that are inspired by al-Qa`ida's example and ideology.

3 Michael von Tangen Page, *Prisons, Peace and Terrorism: Penal Policy in the Reduction of Political Violence in Northern Ireland, Italy and the Spanish Basque Country, 1968-97* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998).

4 Alison Jamieson, "Entry, Discipline and Exit in the Italian Red Brigades," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 2:1 (1990).

5 Marianne Heiberg, "ETA: Euskadi 'ta Askatasuna," in Marianne Heiberg, Brendan O'Leary, and John Tirman eds., *Terror, Insurgencies and States: Breaking the Cycle of Protracted Conflict* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).

6 Von Tangen Page.

"Social reinsertion" quickly became one of the key elements of Spanish counterterrorism policy. Prisoners who had not been convicted of crimes involving serious injury or death were offered early release in exchange for three conditions: 1) the renunciation of violence and the breaking of links with the terrorist organization; 2) a declaration that the prisoner would respect the law and acknowledge that they could be reimprisoned if they did not; 3) recognition of the suffering that they had caused. These three conditions were met through the signing of a legal document that was presented to a judicial tribunal, allowing their reintegration into normal society.

Both programs operated in different political contexts. *Dissociati* occurred when the wider terrorist campaign in Italy was in serious decline, whereas "social reinsertion" was introduced in a context where the terrorist violence in Spain ultimately endured although the policy still facilitated the exit of hundreds of prisoners from terrorist groups.

Disengagement vs. Deradicalization

Dissociati and "social reinsertion" were probably the two most successful disengagement programs introduced in prison settings during the past 50 years. Yet despite their success, both are largely overlooked when designing current "deradicalization" programs aimed at jihadist prisoners. Crucially, neither program was a deradicalization scheme in the contemporary understanding of the term. The programs were not designed to change a prisoner's attitudes or opinions. On the contrary, the terrorists who took part had already made the decision to change before they applied for the program. The program did not convince them that continued life as a terrorist was wrong or unjustified; rather, it allowed them access to a third way once they had already reached that decision for themselves.

In stark contrast, modern deradicalization programs take as the starting point that the individual still believes in the terrorist ideology and remains committed to the "cause." The modern programs aim to convince the individual that these beliefs are mistaken

and flawed. This approach underlies the programs run in Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Yemen and Singapore. Once the individual is convinced of the flaws in the ideology, they are then supposedly "deradicalized." Yet how realistic is the assumption that individuals can actually be deradicalized?

Is Deradicalization Even Possible?

Claims of success vary, but the general assessment is that current jihadist deradicalization programs generally only "work" with "soft core" militant jihadists, while usually having little impact with hardcore members. Crucially, no thorough evaluations of any of these programs are available yet in the open literature and claims about their effectiveness need to be treated with caution.

There are two main reasons for this. First, re-offending by terrorist prisoners is traditionally generally low to begin with. Based on available reviews, on average probably less than five percent of all terrorist prisoners will be re-convicted for involvement in terrorist-related activity.[7] For some groups, the figure is even lower. In England and Wales from September 11, 2001 to March 31, 2008, there were 196 convictions for terrorist-related offenses, most of which were connected to al-Qa`ida-related extremism.[8] Many of these individuals received relatively short prison sentences, and by early 2009 nearly 100 had already been released back into society; to date, none have been re-arrested or convicted for subsequent involvement in terrorist activity (or apparently any other illegal activity).[9] There is no evidence that any have attempted to engage in terrorist activity overseas.

If this is what can occur in absence of a deradicalization program, it should not be surprising that when countries do run such programs they are able to

announce re-offending rates that also appear remarkably low. For example, the much-discussed Saudi program has an alleged re-offending rate of less than three percent, while the Indonesian program claims a re-offending rate of less than one percent.[10]

The recent UK experience, however, suggests that in the vast majority of cases, disengagement from terrorism will occur in the absence of any participation in a prison deradicalization program. Indeed, recent research has highlighted that

> "While a desire to try to rehabilitate should be applauded, the manner in which deradicalization programs are developing in the West raises serious concerns."

many prisoners (if indeed not most) remain highly sympathetic to the cause but either no longer believe that violence is the most effective way to achieve the movement's aims or else are no longer willing to break the law themselves on behalf of the movement.[11] As one prisoner interviewed in a UK jail explained, "the cause is a moral cause," while adding that he no longer believed that violence was the best way to achieve it.[12]

A vital issue to consider is that many members of terrorist groups will eventually leave that group even if they never experience a deradicalization program. Psychologically speaking, this is not surprising. In the U.S. military, for comparison, an annual turnover of at least 15% is normal.[13] Some 80,000 people who are in the U.S. military today will leave within the

7   See, for example, John Horgan and Kurt Braddock, "Rehabilitating the Terrorists? Challenges in Assessing the Effectiveness of De-Radicalization Programmes," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 22:2 (2010).

8   Andrew Silke, "Terrorists and Extremists in Prison: Psychological Issues in Management and Reform," in Andrew Silke ed., *The Psychology of Counter-Terrorism* (London: Routledge, 2010).

9   Personal interviews, prison staff in the United Kingdom, 2009-2010.

10   Horgan and Braddock.

11   Neil Ferguson, "Disengaging from Terrorism," in Andrew Silke ed., *The Psychology of Counter-Terrorism* (London: Routledge, 2010).

12   Personal interview, anonymous prisoner, United Kingdom, 2006.

13   "The All-Volunteer Military: Issues and Performance," U.S. Congressional Budget Office, July 2007.

next 12 months.[14] In the vast majority of cases, the decision to leave is a voluntary one taken by the individual in a context where the organization itself would prefer them to stay. The average length of service for new recruits is just seven years. Few stay as long as 15 years.

Individuals join volunteer militaries for a range of motives—not all of which relate to ideology—and a similar set of motives explains why individuals join terrorist groups. The processes that push and pull individuals into joining both types of organizations can be similar.[15] In making the decision to leave a conventional military such as the U.S. Army, departing members do not go through a deradicalization program. On the contrary, the U.S. military runs several programs designed to persuade members to stay for longer, but every year some 80,000 still make the call to end their commitment.

Significantly, while these departed are no longer willing to continue to be part of the military (i.e. they have disengaged), that does not necessarily mean that their attitude toward the military is generally a negative one. On the contrary, most still have a positive regard for their prior organization and have tremendous respect and goodwill for the comrades they have left behind. In short, the fact that they left does not mean that they are now opponents of the military. They are disengaged, not deradicalized.

Similar levels of turnover seem to exist with many terrorist groups. It is a myth that "once a terrorist, always a terrorist," or that terrorist groups always ruthlessly punish members who try to leave. Most terrorist groups explicitly recognize that membership will be transitory and have processes to allow members to "retire."[16] A natural drop-out rate of at least 15% per year is probably conservative given the high levels of stress associated with being an active terrorist. Dropping-

out means that these individuals are no longer a direct threat to society, but does not necessarily mean that they could or should be described as deradicalized.

Some skepticism is also needed with regard to the right vectors for deradicalization. In most of the deradicalization programs focused on militant jihadists, a key role is assigned to conversations, dialogue and interaction with moderate Muslims. Yet how realistic is it to expect individuals set in their ways to switch their support based on conversations with moderate imams? Indeed, the more "successful" programs do not just involve dialogue. They also involve several benefits for prisoners who graduate from the deradicalization program. Graduates are moved to more lenient prison regimes, are released early, and in some cases receive special support with employment, housing and family. Realistically, these benefits, rather than the much hyped ideological dialogue, likely play the key role in successful disengagement. If it means getting out of prison early, many individuals are prepared to tell the authorities that they have been convinced of their previous errors.

Disengagement a More Realistic Outcome

This reveals the heart of the issue. Which course of action is better? Disengagement or deradicalization? Is the priority to change people's behavior or is it to change their psychology? In the end, acts of violence require behavior, and changing this behavior should be the number one focus.

While a desire to try to rehabilitate should be applauded, the manner in which deradicalization programs are developing in the West raises serious concerns. Unlike those elsewhere in the world, the Western versions are often not supported by clear incentives such as early release from prison or increased financial support upon release. This is certainly the case with the United Kingdom's program. Instead, heavy emphasis is placed on the dialogue element alone. Such a framework depends almost entirely on ideology being the key factor in explaining why people engage in terrorism, yet a wealth of research on the psychology of terrorists

shows that ideology generally only plays a secondary role in explaining engagement, and that other factors tend to be more important.[17]

The language itself is also problematic. In the 1970s and 1980s, there were no claims of Irish Republican Army (IRA) members being "radicalized," and there was no reference to a "radicalization process." Such a terminology and framework has primarily been a post 9/11 phenomenon and it has been developed in regard to al-Qa`ida and its disparate affiliates. This is not to say that there is no value in the framework, but rather a warning that analysts must be careful in considering how useful and accurate an understanding the framework gives.

Since the IRA was not discussed in terms of "radicalization," equally there was no discussion of dealing with its members in terms of "deradicalization." Former IRA Chief of Staff Martin McGuinness, for example, has never been through a deradicalization program, yet nonetheless he is now clearly committed to conventional politics and occupies one of the most senior posts in Northern Ireland's current regional government. Indeed, no one during the troubles suggested that a deradicalization program should or could be established in prisons for IRA prisoners. No one argued that the state should arrange for moderate Irish Republicans to enter prison and engage in dialogue with IRA members to convince them that their interpretation of Irish Republicanism was too extreme and too harsh and that they needed to adopt a more moderate version instead.

14 Ibid.

15 Andrew Silke, "Becoming a Terrorist," in Andrew Silke ed., *Terrorists, Victims and Society: Psychological Perspectives on Terrorism and its Consequences* (Chichester: Wiley, 2003).

16 John Horgan, *Walking Away from Terrorism* (London: Routledge, 2009).

17 See, for example, John Horgan, "From Profiles to Pathways and Roots to Routes: Perspectives from Psychology on Radicalization into Terrorism," *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 618:1 (2008); Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko, "Mechanisms of Political Radicalization: Pathways Toward Terrorism," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 20:3 (2008); Jeff Victoroff and Arie W. Kruglanski eds., *Psychology of Terrorism: Classic and Contemporary Insights* (New York: Psychology Press, 2009).

Almost certainly the principle reason no attempt like this was made was because no one believed that such an approach would actually work. Yet across the world today, this is a major principle on which most jihadist deradicalization programs are built.

A fundamental question facing these programs is what is it that they are trying to change? Most programs do not simply want to change the prisoner's behavior, but a prisoner's beliefs and mind-set. They want the prisoner to believe that a cause that was previously seen as good, worthy and justified is in fact bad, misguided and unwarranted. In the end, prioritizing deradicalization over disengagement is a dangerous gamble. It provides a distorted view of the real nature of both the problem and its solutions.

Dr. Andrew Silke holds a Chair in Criminology at the University of East London where he is also the Program Director for Terrorism Studies. He was appointed in 2009 as a Specialist Advisor to the House of Commons Communities and Local Government Committee for its inquiry into the Government's program for preventing violent extremism. He sits on the British Psychological Society's working group on the Psychological Risk Assessment of those Convicted or Detained under Terrorist Related Offences.

Recent Highlights in Terrorist Activity

November 1, 2010 (UNITED STATES): U.S. authorities arrested Mohamud Abdi Yusuf in St. Louis on charges of providing material support to the al-Shabab terrorist group in Somalia. – *Wall Street Journal, November 3*

November 1, 2010 (UNITED STATES): U.S. authorities charged three San Diego men with aiding the al-Shabab terrorist group in Somalia. – *BBC, November 3*

November 2, 2010 (UNITED STATES): U.S. authorities arrested Abdi Mahdi Hussein in Minneapolis and charged him with conspiracy to structure financial transactions. His case is connected to Mohamud Abdi Yusuf in St. Louis, who was arrested the previous day for providing material support to the al-Shabab terrorist group in Somalia. – *Wall Street Journal, November 3*

November 2, 2010 (IRAQ): A series of explosions across Baghdad killed at least 75 people. The bombings occurred predominately in Shi`a areas. – *Voice of America, November 2; Guardian, November 2*

November 3, 2010 (IRAQ): Al-Qa`ida in Iraq threatened that Christians in the country were legitimate targets who face the "doors of destruction." The statement came three days after an October 31 attack where militants wearing suicide vests attacked the Church of Our Lady of Salvation in Baghdad. During that attack, at least 52 people were killed. – *Telegraph, November 1; al-Jazira, November 2; Guardian, November 3*

November 4, 2010 (GLOBAL): Al-Qa`ida second-in-command Ayman al-Zawahiri released a new audio message, calling for revenge after a U.S. court sentenced Aafia Siddiqui, a Pakistani citizen, to 86 years in prison on multiple charges, including attempted murder and armed assault on U.S. officers. In 2008, Siddiqui, who was detained at the time, fired a rifle at FBI agents and U.S. military personnel in central Afghanistan. – *CNN, November 4*

November 4, 2010 (TURKEY): The Kurdistan Freedom Falcons claimed responsibility for the October 31 suicide bombing in Istanbul's Taksim Square.

The group said the attack was an "act of revenge." – *BBC, November 4*

November 5, 2010 (GLOBAL): Al-Qa`ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) claimed responsibility for a major international terrorist plot that was disrupted in late October. The plot involved explosive packages mailed to the United States from Yemen. – *al-Jazira, November 6*

November 5, 2010 (UNITED STATES): A U.S. appeals court overturned a judge's order for the release of Guantanamo Bay detainee Mohamedou Ould Salahi, saying that the lower court must reconsider the case due to new legal opinions in other Guantanamo lawsuits. – *AP, November 5*

November 5, 2010 (PAKISTAN): A suicide bomber ripped through a mosque in Dara Adam Khel in northwest Pakistan, killing at least 66 people. According to press reports, the Sunni mosque that was targeted is frequented by anti-Taliban tribal elders. – *Sky News, November 5*

November 7, 2010 (AFGHANISTAN): The Saudi government announced its withdrawal from peace talks between Afghan President Hamid Karzai and the Afghan Taliban. – *CBS News, November 9*

November 7, 2010 (PAKISTAN): A U.S. aerial drone killed nine suspected militants in Ghulam Khan in North Waziristan Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. – *Guardian, November 7*

November 7, 2010 (PAKISTAN): A U.S. aerial drone killed five suspected militants in Datta Khel in North Waziristan Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. – *Guardian, November 7*

November 8, 2010 (IRAQ): A suicide bomber in an explosives-laden vehicle targeted Iranian pilgrims in Karbala, killing at least 10 people. – *AFP, November 7*

November 9, 2010 (GLOBAL): A new video featuring Yemeni-American cleric Anwar al-`Awlaqi appeared on Islamist web forums. In the statement, al-`Awlaqi urged Muslims to murder Americans. He said that no religious permission is required to kill Americans because they are "from the party of devils." – *ABC News, November 8; Australian Broadcasting Corporation, November 9*

November 11, 2010 (PAKISTAN): A U.S. drone strike killed at least six militants in North Waziristan Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. – *AFP, November 11*

November 11, 2010 (PAKISTAN): At least six gunmen opened fire on the Criminal Investigation Department headquarters in Karachi. After opening fire, another militant drove a truck packed with TNT explosives into the boundary wall of the facility, destroying the headquarters. At least 16 people were killed. The Pakistani Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack, saying it was "a reaction to the drone strikes and such attacks will continue until drone strikes are stopped." – *Los Angeles Times, November 12; Dawn, November 20*

November 14, 2010 (IRAQ): A suicide bomber detonated an explosives-laden vehicle in Mosul, Ninawa Province, killing two Iraqi army soldiers. – *UPI, November 14*

November 14, 2010 (LEBANON): Authorities arrested radical Lebanese cleric Omar Bakri after confronting him in Tripoli. On November 11, Bakri was convicted on charges of inciting a months-long confrontation between the government and the militant group Fatah al-Islam that took place in 2007. He faces life imprisonment. – *Los Angeles Times, November 15*

November 15, 2010 (AFGHANISTAN): Mullah Omar, the leader of the Afghan Taliban, purportedly released a new statement saying that peace negotiations in Afghanistan were not possible until all foreign troops left the country. – *Reuters, November 15*

November 15, 2010 (IRAQ): Twin car bombs exploded in Mosul, Ninawa Province, killing a prison official and one civilian. – *Voice of America, November 15*

November 16, 2010 (PAKISTAN): A suspected U.S. aerial drone targeted a house and a vehicle in the village of Bangi Dar in North Waziristan Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. Approximately 20 suspected militants were killed. – *MSNBC.com, November 16*

November 17, 2010 (UNITED STATES): A U.S. court found Ahmed Khalfan Ghailani, a 36-year-old Tanzanian held at Guantanamo Bay, guilty of conspiracy to destroy U.S. government buildings and property and for helping an al-Qa`ida cell. In a major setback to prosecutors, however, the federal jury acquitted him of the more serious charges of murder and conspiracy. He faces 20 years to life in prison when he is sentenced in January. – *Guardian, November 18*

November 21, 2010 (GLOBAL): Al-Qa`ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) released a new issue of its *Inspire* magazine, saying that its recent attempt to bomb U.S.-bound cargo planes only cost $4,200 to execute. The magazine said that AQAP is pursuing a "strategy of a thousand cuts" that will "bleed the enemy to death" by mounting more frequent, low-cost attacks. – *Voice of America, November 22; Washington Post, November 22*

November 21, 2010 (PAKISTAN): A U.S. aerial drone strike killed six suspected militants in North Waziristan Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. – *AFP, November 21*

November 24, 2010 (YEMEN): A suicide bomber in an explosives-laden vehicle targeted a group of Shi`a Huthis on their way to a religious ceremony, killing at least 20 people. According to the *New York Times*, "Suspicions fell on Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), the local affiliate of Osama bin Laden's terrorist network. But if Al Qaeda was responsible, it would be the first act of violence between two groups that have long fought the government separately." The bombing occurred in al-Jawf Province. In a statement released on November 25, AQAP purportedly took credit for the attack. – *Investor's Business Daily, November 24; New York Times, November 24; AFP, November 26; AFP, November 28*

November 26, 2010 (UNITED STATES): U.S. authorities arrested Mohamed Osman Mohamud, a naturalized immigrant from Somalia, on charges of attempting to use a weapon of mass destruction by detonating a car bomb at a Christmas tree lighting event in Portland's Pioneer Courthouse Square. As stated by the *Wall Street Journal*, "Authorities say the youth, who recently attended Oregon State University in Corvallis, twice attempted to use a cellphone to detonate what he believed were explosives stored in 55-gallon drums packed into a white van, which he drove to the scene and parked near the Christmas tree gathering. Both the detonator and the explosives were provided by FBI agents working undercover in the investigation, but who the suspect believed were connected to an international terrorist organization, according to an affidavit filed in support of the criminal complaint." – *Wall Street Journal, November 29*

November 26, 2010 (YEMEN): A suicide bomber in an explosives-laden vehicle targeted a funeral procession of Shi`a Huthis in Marib Province, killing at least one person. – *Bloomberg, November 26*

November 26, 2010 (SAUDI ARABIA): Saudi authorities announced the arrests of 149 alleged al-Qa`ida-linked militants during the past eight months. The militants are accused of plotting attacks against the government and security forces, as well as journalists. – *Wall Street Journal, November 27*

November 27, 2010 (AFGHANISTAN): Two suicide bombers wearing police uniforms detonated their explosives at a provincial police headquarters in Paktika Province, killing at least 10 police officers. The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack. – *Voice of America, November 27*

November 30, 2010 (PAKISTAN): A suicide bomber targeted a police van in Bannu District of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, killing six people including a policeman. – *Daily Times, December 1*

December 1, 2010 (SPAIN): Spanish authorities announced the arrests of seven men in Barcelona who are accused of stealing passports for terrorist groups such as al-Qa`ida, Lashkar-i-Tayyiba, and the Tamil Tigers. The suspects consist of six Pakistanis and one Nigerian. Two more Pakistanis and a Thai national were detained in Thailand. According to one press report, "The [passport] thefts [in Spain] were allegedly requested by the Thailand-based head of the group, who asked for passports with specific nationalities and age brackets." – *Wall Street Journal, December 1; Australian Broadcasting Corporation, December 2*

December 6, 2010 (PAKISTAN): Two suicide bombers attacked a gathering of anti-Taliban tribal elders, killing at least 41 people. The incident occurred in the town of Ghalanai in Mohmand Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal

Areas. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, "Witnesses said more than 300 people were inside the building when the two attackers appeared. One of the bombers was dressed in a police uniform and was able to walk into the offices where the crowd had gathered. A second bomber was stopped at a perimeter security gate. Both men detonated their explosives seconds apart." – *Los Angeles Times, December 6*

December 7, 2010 (UNITED STATES): The U.S. Treasury Department designated Fahd al-Quso as a global terrorist. Al-Quso was jailed in Yemen from 2002-2007 for his role in the *USS Cole* attack. After his release, he joined al-Qa`ida in the Arabian Peninsula. – *Wall Street Journal, December 7*

December 7, 2010 (PAKISTAN): A suicide bomber detonated explosives near the convoy of Nawab Muhammad Aslam Khan Raisani, the chief minister of Baluchistan Province. The minister escaped injury, but the explosion killed at least one person. The incident occurred in Quetta. – *BBC, December 7*

December 8, 2010 (UNITED STATES): Antonio Martinez, a recent convert to Islam, was arrested after he allegedly tried to blow up a U.S. military recruitment center in Maryland. Martinez, however, was provided with a faulty bomb as part of an FBI sting operation. The 21-year-old Baltimore construction worker was charged with attempted use of a weapon of mass destruction and attempted murder of federal officers and employees. – *Los Angeles Times, December 8*

December 8, 2010 (PAKISTAN): A suicide bomber blew up a bus in Kohat District of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, killing 17 people. – *New York Times, December 9; AFP, December 10*

December 9, 2010 (CANADA): A Canadian court ruled that Mohamed Harkat is likely an al-Qa`ida sleeper agent and remains a national security threat. Harkat, an Algerian and a former Ottawa pizza delivery man, faces possible deportation to Algeria. – *AFP, December 9*

December 9, 2010 (MAURITANIA): The U.S. State Department warned Americans to practice extreme caution when in Mauritania due to the rising al-Qa`ida threat in the country. – *UPI, December 9*

December 10, 2010 (PAKISTAN): A suicide bomber detonated an explosives-laden vehicle outside a hospital in Hangu District of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, killing at least eight people. The attack appeared to target Shi`a. – *AFP, December 10*

December 11, 2010 (SWEDEN): Taimour Abdulwahab al-Abdaly, an Iraqi-born Swede, detonated a car bomb in Stockholm before taking his own life with a second bomb strapped to his body. Al-Abdaly was the only fatality. The incident marked the first suicide attack in Sweden's history. – *Guardian, December 13; Telegraph, December 12*

December 12, 2010 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide bomber in an explosives-laden vehicle killed six U.S. soldiers in Kandahar Province. The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack. – *Washington Post, December 12*

December 12, 2010 (IRAQ): A suicide car bomb killed at least 13 people in Ramadi, Anbar Province. The explosion occurred near a heavily fortified provincial government compound. – *Los Angeles Times, December 13; New York Times, December 12*

December 15, 2010 (SWEDEN): A new Swedish intelligence report reveals that possibly 200 violent Islamist extremists live in Sweden. Taimour Abdulwahab al-Abdaly, who executed a terrorist attack in Stockholm on December 11, was not on that list. According to the report, most of the 200 "were born or grew up in Sweden, and it is here that they come into contact with violence-promoting ideologies and groups." – *AFP, December 15*

December 15, 2010 (IRAN): Suicide bombers attacked a mosque in Chabahar, killing at least 35 people. The militant group Jundallah apparently claimed responsibility. – *UPI, December 15*

December 15, 2010 (YEMEN): A bomb was thrown at a vehicle carrying U.S. Embassy staffers in Sana`a. Those in the vehicle were not injured. – *AP, December 16*

December 17, 2010 (UNITED STATES): A U.S. federal judge sentenced Madhatta Asagal Haipe to 23 years in prison for his role in kidnapping 16 tourists, including four Americans, in the southern Philippines in 1995. Haipe was a senior leader of the Abu Sayyaf Group. – *Washington Post, December 18*

December 19, 2010 (SOMALIA): Somalia's two main insurgent groups—al-Shabab and Hisbul Islamiyya—reportedly plan to merge to defeat the UN-backed government in Mogadishu. According to UPI, "The two Islamist groups have fought intermittently over the last couple of years because of ideological differences. Hizbul-e Islam is more nationalistic than the more radical al-Shabaab, which favors a more international agenda as espoused by Osama bin Laden." – *AP, December 19; UPI, December 21*

December 20, 2010 (UNITED KINGDOM): British police arrested 12 men who were allegedly plotting a terrorist attack in the United Kingdom. Five of the men were reportedly of Bangladeshi origin. Three of the 12 men were later released without charge. According to one press report, citing British broadcasters, "the men were accused of plotting attacks to coincide with the Christmas holidays and had reconnoitered targets like the American Embassy, the London Stock Exchange and religious and political leaders." – *New York Times, December 27*

December 21, 2010 (UNITED STATES): U.S. intelligence officials reportedly told CNN that al-Qa`ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) considered poisoning food served at hotels and restaurants in the United States. AQAP was supposedly considering tainting food supplies with the deadly chemicals ricin and cyanide. – *AFP, December 22*

December 24, 2010 (NETHERLANDS): Dutch authorities arrested 12 men of Somali origin in Rotterdam due to concern that they were planning an "imminent" terrorist attack. No weapons or explosives were reportedly found, and a number of the suspects were later released. – *CNN, December 26*

December 24, 2010 (PAKISTAN): Approximately 150 militants launched a coordinated attack on five checkpoints in Mohmand Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. Approximately 11 soldiers and 24 militants were killed. – *Voice of America, December 24*

December 24, 2010 (PAKISTAN): Pakistani military intelligence officials told reporters that they recently apprehended Nasiruddin Haqqani, the son of Afghan insurgent leader Jalaluddin Haqqani. – *Geo.tv, December 25*

December 24, 2010 (SAUDI ARABIA): Saudi police killed a suspected al-Qa`ida militant and arrested another at a checkpoint in the central town of Wadi al-Dawasir. One of the men was disguised as a woman. – *Reuters, December 24*

December 25, 2010 (PAKISTAN): A suicide bomber detonated explosives in an aid line in Bajaur Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, killing at least 40 people. The bomber, reportedly a woman, first threw two hand grenades into a crowd of people, and then detonated an explosives vest. The incident occurred at the UN's World Food Program distribution center in Khar. The Pakistani Taliban claimed responsibility for the bombing, saying that it was aimed at members of an anti-Taliban tribe. – *NBC News, December 25; Voice of America, December 26*

December 25, 2010 (PHILIPPINES): A bomb exploded during a Christmas Day service at a chapel inside a police camp in Jolo, located in the southern Philippines. A priest and 10 civilians were wounded. Authorities suspect that the Abu Sayyaf Group was responsible. – *AP, December 25*

December 27, 2010 (IRAQ): Two suicide bombers detonated explosives in front of a government office in Anbar Province, killing nine people. According to a press report, "Many of the people killed and injured in Monday's violence were family members of police and soldiers who died Dec. 12 at the same location in another suicide blast. The family members were at the provincial headquarters to receive compensation for their losses." – *AP, December 27*

December 27, 2010 (PAKISTAN): U.S. aerial drones destroyed two vehicles in North Waziristan Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, killing 18 alleged militants. – *Guardian, December 27*

December 27, 2010 (SOMALIA): A leader in Somalia's Islamist insurgency, Fuad Mohamed Khalaf, warned, "We tell the American President Barack Obama to embrace Islam before we come to his country." – *AFP, December 27*

December 28, 2010 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide bomber killed two Afghan soldiers in Paktika Province. – *AFP, December 29*

December 29, 2010 (DENMARK): Danish authorities arrested five suspected terrorists who were planning to "kill as many people as possible" at the offices of *Jyllands-Posten*, the Copenhagen newspaper that previously published cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad. The suspects apparently launched the plot from Sweden, and that country's intelligence services played a role in the arrests as well. – *Independent, December 30*

December 29, 2010 (IRAQ): Two suicide bombers attacked a police battalion in Mosul, Ninawa Province, killing the commander and three other police officers. According to Reuters, "The sources said two attackers, wearing explosive vests, detonated their vests in the room of Lieutenant Colonel Shamil Ahmed, who headed the battalion. A third suicide bomber was killed by police before he was able to enter the building." – *Reuters, December 29; Voice of America, December 29*

December 30, 2010 (IRAQ): Militants placed bombs near the homes of at least 14 Christian families in Baghdad, killing two people. – *New York Times, December 30*

December 30, 2010 (TURKEY): Turkish authorities announced that they recently detained 10 people with suspected links to al-Qa`ida. The suspects were allegedly planning to execute a terrorist attack before New Year's Eve. – *AP, December 30*